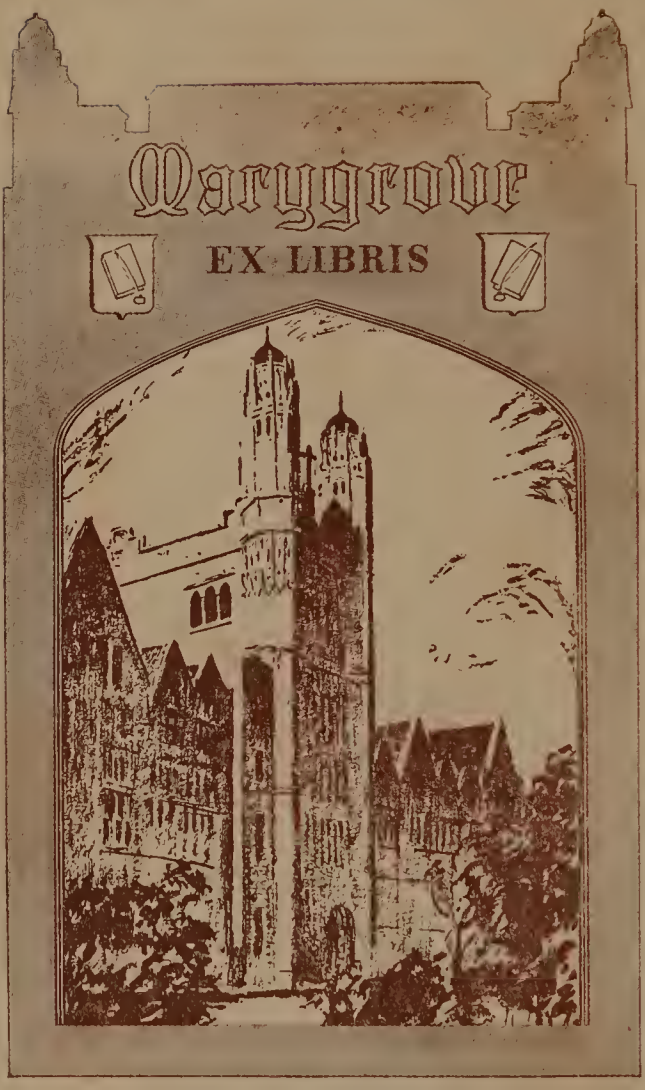
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MEMOIRS

OF

THE MUSICAL DRAMA.

BY GEORGE HOGARTH,

AUTHOR OF

"MUSICAL HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, AND CRITICISM."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

THE author of the following pages has called them *Memoirs*, not a *History*, of the Musical Drama; because, though he has endeavoured to give a connected, and (he hopes) tolerably comprehensive view of the progress of the Opera, yet he has not deemed it advisable to treat the subject with that degree of severity, in regard to form and substance, which "the dignity of History" might have required.

While he has attempted to trace the origin of the combination of music with theatrical exhibitions in those countries of Europe which possess a national opera; to show how the progress of the opera in one of these countries acted on its progress in the others; to give an account of the principal

works, belonging to this branch of the drama, which have appeared in these various countries, and of the manner in which the production of these works contributed to the advancement of the art; and to take a critical view of the qualities and merits of the most distinguished poets, musicians, and performers belonging to the lyrical stage; he has interwoven these particulars with many details, anecdotes, and circumstances connected with the opera, calculated to throw light on the lives and characters of eminent individuals, as well as to afford glimpses of the state of society and manners in different ages and countries.

The method followed by the author will be seen at a glance from the table of contents. He will only observe, that, in these Memoirs of the past, he has not entered into details respecting the present state of the musical drama, or into critical observations on the merits of contemporaries whose names do not yet belong to musical history.

The arrangement of such a work as the present must to a certain extent be arbitrary. Where history descends in parallel streams, the narrative must of course follow them in succession, passing from the one to the other, in such a manner as to keep contemporary occurrences as near to each

other as possible. Particular points frequently present themselves at which the narrative may be conveniently broken off; but in many instances this must be done, simply because one branch of the history seems to be getting too much in advance of the others. In such instances no two writers would proceed in the same way; and no way that can be adopted will prevent a certain degree of inconvenience which must arise from the nature of the subject.

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MEMOIRS

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We shall not attempt, as many writers have done, to go back to the days of the Greeks and Romans in search of the origin of the Musical Drama. In the ancient tragedy, it appears, the declamation of the actor was accompanied by certain musical instruments which regulated the tones of his voice; and the stage was occupied by a *Chorus* consisting of a number of persons, who, though not actually

engaged in the action of the piece, were interested in it, and mingled their reflections or exclamations with the dialogue of the drama. In the modern opera the characters speak in recitative, and there is a chorus; and hence it is inferred that the modern opera has sprung from the ancient tragedy. It is probable that the idea of recitative was suggested to its inventors by what they had read of the musical declamation of the ancient tragedies; and the chorus of an Italian opera is very analogous, in its functions and connexion with the drama, to the chorus of the Greeks. But the one cannot be said to have been derived from the other: for, before the invention of the opera, the knowledge of the mode of performing the ancient tragedy had been irrecoverably lost by the lapse of a long series of ages.

The modern theatre, of every description, may be traced to those dramatic entertainments which seem to have been common in the darkest periods of the middle ages. Mankind has a natural propensity to mimicry and the representation of feigned characters. Children begin to act as soon as they can speak; and there is hardly any tribe that is without some notion of inventing and performing plays. When Europe was immersed in ignorance, those fictitious representations called *Mysteries* and *Moralities* were the favourite pastime of all sorts of people. As learning and civilisation advanced, these uncouth entertainments gained

some degree of refinement and regularity, and acquired something of the form of those ancient dramatic pieces which now came to be known and studied. In this way the modern drama, though originating in the middle ages, may be considered as having received its polish and cultivation from the models of classical antiquity.

It was thus that the opera, as well as the other branches of the drama, took its rise. Songs, choruses, and dances, were introduced into the rude exhibitions we have mentioned, and, indeed, continued to form a part of all dramatic representations down to a comparatively recent period. The union of dialogue and action with music, dancing, and pageantry, produced that species of entertainment known by the name of the *Masque*, which enjoyed its greatest favour in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and was the immediate forerunner of the opera.

This has been the progress of the Musical Drama in all those countries where it now flourishes : but it was in Italy that it first assumed a distinct form. In that country, the *Mystery*, or religious tragedy, gradually assumed the shape of the *Oratorio*, or sacred musical drama ; and the *Masque*, or secular play, intermixed with music and *spectacle*, was converted into the regular opera. The oratorio, as well as the opera, of other countries, were derived from those of Italy.

When the religious dramas, divested of their pro

fanities and grossness, were introduced into the church, and distinguished by the name of Oratorios, they were no longer acted, as they had formerly been. The poem was generally in a dramatic form, and, in the performance, each part was allotted to a different singer: but the piece was merely sung and recited, without action, or any of the adjuncts of theatrical representation. Such is the shape which the oratorio has ever since retained. Many oratorios have not a vestige of the dramatic form, even in the structure of the poem, or the composition of the music. The greatest of Handel's oratorios, for instance, *The Messiah*, and *Israel in Egypt*, with many others which might be mentioned, are not dramatic in any sense of the word. The oratorio, therefore, is improperly classed under the head of the Musical Drama. It belongs to the church, not to the theatre; and a musical drama, on a sacred subject, adapted for theatrical representation (such as Rossini's well-known *Mosè in Egitto*) is not an oratorio, but an opera.

The very term, oratorio, applied to these performances of sacred music, shows that they were connected with the service of the church. The word, derived from the Latin "oratorium," means a chapel containing an altar, where the devout can offer up their prayers. The Italian writers agree in ascribing the origin of the oratorio to San Filippo Neri, who founded the congregation of the oratory at Rome, in the year 1540. This was

an order, or establishment of priests, which gradually spread itself all over Italy. It was their practice to render the service of the church as agreeable as possible, in order to attract young people thither, and draw them away from stage-plays and other profane amusements. For this purpose they began by the introduction of canticles, and spiritual songs and choruses; and afterwards, to increase the attraction, scripture stories and incidents were formed into dramatic poems, written in dialogue, and set to music by the best composers of the time. These productions were recited and sung, with the accompaniment of instruments, before and after the sermon; so that the attention of the congregation was thus (it was presumed) secured to the religious instructions of the preacher. These pieces were founded on the story of the good Samaritan, the trials of Job, the prodigal son, the annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, and other subjects calculated to excite the feelings or the imagination of the auditory.* They speedily acquired

* An English traveller gives the following account of these performances at Bologna, in 1720. "They have in their churches a diverting piece of devotion, which they call an oratorio. It is a musical drama of two acts, after the manner of the stage-operas, with *recitativo* between the songs. The subject is either a scripture story, or a story of some of their saints; generally the last. Between the acts there is a sermon; so timed (I suppose) to secure such of the audience as might be apt to leave the preacher in the lurch, if they were not to have some music to sweeten their mouths with at last. The

great popularity ; and oratorios became common in the principal churches throughout Italy, where indeed they are regularly performed to this day. In Italy the performance of oratorios is still confined to the churches. In this and other countries, they are also performed in public halls, concert rooms, and even theatres : but in no case, not even when the poem is in a dramatic form, is there the slightest approach to dramatic representation.

In the sketch, therefore, which we are about to give of the progress of the Musical Drama, we shall not include the oratorio ; considering it as being

whole is introdueed with a performanee somewhat unusual, a *Discorso* (as they term it) spoken by a little boy. We heard two of them. The first was about six years old, who mounted the rostrum with a stately gravity, and, after having saluted the audienee, eocked his hat, (for they are covered upon sueh occasions in the ehurehes) and, with a solemn wave of the hand, pronounced, *silenzio !* before he began his diseourse. The latter could not be above four years old, both by his size and speech, for he could but just speak plain ; him they dressed up in the habit of a priest, and the little creature performed to a miracle. The subject of the diseourse is taken from the oeeasion of their meeting. The former was upon the eve of All Souls : charity to our friends in purgatory was the topic. The latter was on the night of the grand proeession on aecount of the plague, whieh was then at Marseilles : of that, repentanee and humiliation was the subjeet. They teaeh these little orators, not only the emphasis and aceent, but the proper action likewise, which they perform extremely well."—*Wright's Observations in travelling through France, Italy, &c.*

neither comprehended in our subject nor at all connected with it.

The oldest of those entertainments which ripened into the Italian musical drama, belong to the fifteenth century. They were not performed in public theatres, but in the halls of the great, by whom they were given for the amusement of distinguished guests. Thus we have a description of an entertainment given in 1480, by Bergontio Botta, a nobleman of Lombardy, when he was visited by the Duke of Milan and his newly-married spouse, Isabella of Arragon, grand-daughter of Ferdinand, king of Naples. To these illustrious guests he gave a magnificent supper, accompanied with an exhibition in which the rudiments of the opera may be plainly discerned.

The play, as it may be called, was begun by Jason bringing in the golden fleece, with which he covered the supper-table. Then Mercury made his appearance, and sang the stratagems by which he had contrived to steal from Apollo, who kept the flocks of Admetus, king of Thessaly, a fat calf for this banquet. Diana brought Acteon changed into a stag; and, after having explained to the company her cause of quarrel with him, told him that, notwithstanding his misdeed, she would do him the grace of having him served up at a feast given to a nymph so fair and chaste as the royal Isabella. Orpheus, who still mourned the loss of his Eurydice, having heard, even amidst the wilds of the

Appenines, of the fame of these nuptials, came with his lyre, to sing the praises of the illustrious pair; and, having drawn a great many birds around him by the sweetness of his strains, he gallantly offered them to the princess. Atalanta brought the head of the Calydonian boar; confessing that she yielded to this stranger nymph the glory of being adored by all the Grecian youth. The rest of the boar was brought in by Theseus and a band of hunters. Iris appeared on her chariot drawn by peacocks, and made one of them be served up with its splendid tail displayed. Hebe presented the nectar of the gods. Apicius came from the Elysian fields to increase the delicacy of the feast by his refinements in the gastronomic art. A party of Arcadian shepherds served up a cheese made by the hands of Pan himself. Vertumnus and Pomona presented the finest fruits; and all sorts of salt and fresh-water fish were brought in by the gods of the sea and the rivers of Lombardy. All these acts of service were accompanied by musical recitations; and, when this prologue was finished, the guests sat down to the feast so classically served up. The repast was followed by another exhibition, approaching more nearly to a regular drama. Orpheus commenced it, by introducing Hymen, followed by a group of Cupids. The three Graces, hand in hand, formed the second scene. They were followed by Conjugal Fidelity, dressed in white, who offered her services to the princess; and, at the same

time, Mercury brought down from heaven Fame, accompanied by Virgil and Livy. After them came Semiramis, with Helen, Medea, and Cleopatra ; and these having begun to sing their wanton loves, were driven away by Conjugal Faith, who forbade them to sully the purity of so sacred an union by the recital of their improprieties. She then let loose upon them a band of Cupids, who pursued them with lighted torches, and set fire to the gauze veils which covered them. Then appeared Lucretia, Penelope, Thomyris Queen of Scythia, Judith, and Portia, who, having rendered themselves famous by the purity of their lives, came to present to the young duchess the palm of chastity which the world had bestowed upon them. Last of all, Silenus, half drunk, and riding on his ass, concluded the piece by singing humorous verses.

An ingenious allegorical piece called *La Verità Raminga*, was represented at Venice about this time, but on what occasion we are not informed.

The first scene represented a doctor and an apothecary, rejoicing that the ills of the world were their good, and that the earth covered their misdoings. Truth, abused and pelted by a band of advocates, attorneys, and suitors, appears in a sad plight, and begs the assistance of the doctor and his companion ;—but they make their escape as soon as they find that the name of the applicant is Truth. A cavalier offers to defend her, but leaves her as soon as she tells him her name. A soldier

next abandons her, because she begins to laugh at his boasting speeches. The first part of the piece was ended by a rustic dance of villagers. In the second part, a merchant appears, congratulating himself, that, in order to get rich, he has only to *break* two or three times, and settle as often with his creditors. In the next scene another merchant wishes to get rid of his conscience as a troublesome and unmarketable commodity. Truth offers to buy, but he will have nothing to do with her as a purchaser. She meets with similar repulses from ladies of various classes: but at last the Dramatic Muse consents to receive her on condition that she shall appear on the stage under an agreeable disguise; for which purpose she furnishes her with a mask, and teaches her the art of changing her voice and manner. The conclusion is the singing and dancing of the comedians, expressive of their joy at the admission of Truth, thus disguised, into their company.

These specimens of the rude dramatic attempts of the Italians, are instances of the love of allegory which seems to have prevailed, in other countries as well as Italy, in those early ages, when Poetry, after her revival, was yet in her second childhood. The subjects of these dramatic pieces, however, were not always allegorical. Some of them were classical, and very like those of a much later period. Perhaps the *Orfeo* of the celebrated poet and scholar Politian, may be regarded as the lineal pro-

genitor of the Italian opera. It is to be found in the *Parnaso Italiano ;* and is a drama in five acts, founded on the ancient tale of Orpheus and Eurydice. The subject of the first act is the love of Aristæus, a Thracian shepherd, for Eurydice, the wife of Orpheus, who, endeavouring to escape from him, is stung by a serpent, and dies. The shepherd sings his love and her cruelty, in a pastoral strain of great beauty. The second act consists of the lamentations of Aristæus, accompanied by a chorus of Dryads, for the death of Eurydice. In the third act, Orpheus appears, singing in *Latin* heroic verse the exploits of Hercules. A Dryad tells him the sorrowful tale of Eurydice's death ; and a satyr follows him to see whether the mountains are moved by his song. The fourth act contains the descent of Orpheus into the infernal regions, his recovery of Eurydice, and her final loss. In the fifth act, the Thracian women, enraged at his inconsolable grief and resolution never to love another, fall upon him and tear him to pieces. This drama, which is very short, seems intended to have been wholly sung, the poetry being of a lyrical kind and finely adapted to the purposes of music. It must have been written towards the end of the fifteenth century, as Politian, who is celebrated as one of the revivers of learning, died in 1494, at the age of forty.

During the sixteenth century, the Italian drama became gradually more and more regular in its

form. In the infancy of the Italian stage, music seems to have been employed in all dramatic pieces. When the dialogue was declaimed, or spoken, choruses were introduced, who sang the prologue and epilogue, and also verses between the acts. By degrees, the musical drama came to be separated from tragedy and comedy; the prologues and epilogues being no longer sung, but merely declaimed, as well as the dialogue; and, in these pieces, the choruses began to be laid aside. But musical *Intermezzi*, or Interludes, were introduced between the acts; and these, though interrupted by the action of the principal piece, were frequently regular dramas themselves; so that a tragedy or comedy, with its interludes, were, in truth, two distinct pieces performed in alternate acts. The intermezzi were composed expressly for the drama, along with which they were to be performed, and had some affinity to their style or subject. They were sometimes considered of importance enough to be separately published; of which we have an instance, in one of them published at Bologna, in 1623, under the title of "*Dafne Conversa in Lauro;* Intermezzi posti in musica da Ottavio Vernizzi, Organista di San Petronio, per *L'Amorosa Innocenza*, Tragicomedia Pastorale, in Bologna, 1623." By this time music had acquired a dramatic importance which it did not possess a very short time before; for, in a Discourse on Dramatic Representation, by Angelo Ingegneri, pub-

lished in 1598, that writer speaks of music as a minor consideration. "I now come to music," he says, "the third and last part of dramatic representation, which, in comedies and pastorals without choruses, may be used at pleasure, in interludes between the acts, to afford some relief to the mind, fatigued by the attention bestowed upon the fable." At last, these intermezzi, which were really independent of the pieces to which they were originally joined, were performed by themselves, and received the name of *Operas;* though operas of a light and comic character continued long afterwards, to go by the name of *Intermezzi.*

The invention of *Recitative,* from which the existence of the Italian opera may properly be dated, took place in the end of the sixteenth century. The honour of this invention is ascribed to two persons; JACOPO PERI, of Florence, and EMILIO DEL CAVALIERE, of Rome. In the same year, 1597, Peri produced the opera of *Dafne,* and Emilio del Cavaliere the oratorio, *Dell' Anima e del Corpo;* and both of these pieces, too, were published in the same year, 1600. The invention is claimed by both composers, and it seems impossible now to determine which of them has the preferable claim. They both speak of it as an attempt to revive what was imagined to be the musical declamation of the Greeks and Romans. It is next to impossible that two persons should have separately constructed, on so slight a foundation, a musical language so

entirely new. One of them must have borrowed it from the other; and it is to be regretted that it cannot be known to whom we are indebted for an invention which forms so remarkable an era in the history of music.*

The introduction of airs for a single voice seems also to have taken place at this time. The music employed in the drama had previously consisted of compositions in many parts, full of elaborate harmonical contrivances, but destitute of grace, rhythm, or melody. Vincenzo Galilei is said to have been the first musician who composed melodies for a single voice; having (according to Doni) thus set to music Dante's famous scene of Count Ugolino, which he himself sang very sweetly, to the accompaniment of a viol. He was imitated by Giulio Caccini, a celebrated Roman singer, who composed a great number of airs, which he

* Burney, with some hesitation, decides in favour of Cavaliere, but on grounds which appear insufficient. He says, (vol. iv. p. 87,) that "Cavaliere seems better entitled to the invention of narrative music than the Florentine composer, by the very dates of the two dramas, which form an era in the history of the opera or oratorio; *L'Anima e il Corpo*, the first sacred drama or oratorio, in which recitative was used, having been performed in the oratory of the church of Santa Maria della Vallicella, at Rome, in February, 1600; and *Euridice*, the first secular drama, or opera, at Florence, in December of the same year." But the first opera performed at Florence was not *Euridice*, but *Dafne*, which, as we have mentioned above, was performed in 1597; and this fact is stated by Burney himself, vol. iv. p. 18. *Euridice* was produced by Peri, after *Dafne*.

taught to his numerous scholars, and created a taste for a new and elegant style of singing, previously unknown in Italy. Caccini is said to have assisted Peri in the composition of his operas.

Cavaliere's oratorio seems to have received this title because it was performed in church. It is not on a scriptural subject, but is a moral allegorical drama, such as were common at that time. The characters are Time, Pleasure, the Body, the World, Human Life, &c.; from which an idea may easily be formed of the nature of the subject. It was represented in action, on a stage erected in the church of La Vallicella, at Rome, with scenery, decorations, and *dances*. The orchestra was placed behind the scenes, and consisted of an instrument called a *lira doppia*, or double lyre, (conjectured to be a viol da gamba,) a harpsichord, a large guitar, and two flutes *all' antica*. The dances were performed to the music of the choruses, and the directions respecting them sound very odd, considering the place of representation. "The performance," says the author, "may be finished with or without a dance. If without, the last chorus may be doubled in all its parts, vocal and instrumental; but if a dance is preferred, a verse beginning thus, 'Chiostri altissimi e stellati,' is to be sung, accompanied sedately and reverentially by the dance. Then shall succeed other grave steps and figures of the solemn kind. During the ritornels*

* The instrumental passages between the stanzas of the chorus.

the four principal dancers are to perform a ballet, enlivened with capers and entrechats, without singing. This is to be repeated after each stanza, always varying the steps of the dance; and the four principal dancers may sometimes use the galliard, sometimes the canary, and sometimes the coranto step, which will do very well in the ritornels." Such was the way in which even the oratorio appears to have been performed in its infancy; till, in the progress of decorum, acting and dancing were excluded from the church and confined to the theatre.

Peri's opera of *Dafne* was performed in the house of Signor Corsi, a distinguished Florentine *dilettante*. The applause which it received induced RINUCCINI, the poet and the composer, to bring out in succession two other operas, *Euridice* and *Ariadne*. *Euridice* was the first opera which was performed in public. It formed part of the entertainments given at Florence, on the occasion of the marriage of Mary of Medicis to Henry IV. of France, in the year 1600; and the poem and music were published separately the same year. Dr. Burney found a copy of the music in the library of the Marchese Rinuccini, (a descendant of the author of the poem,) at Florence. He says that the music was printed in score, and barred, two very uncommon circumstances at the time of its publication; that the recitative seemed to have been not only the model of subsequent composers of early Italian

operas, but of the French operas of Lulli; but that though the word *aria* sometimes occurred, it was difficult to distinguish air from recitative. The orchestra, as at the performance of Cavaliere's oratorio, was placed behind the scenes, and consisted of the same instruments.

Claudio Monteverde, whose name is celebrated in musical history as one of the greatest discoverers in the then unknown regions of harmony, composed the opera of *Orfeo*, for the court of Mantua, in 1607. It was printed at Venice in 1615. The boldness of this composer's genius is observable in the great improvement of the orchestra. The number and variety of instruments are greatly increased, and the voices are not indiscriminately accompanied by the whole band; but the music performed by the several singers is accompanied by instruments of various kinds, specially assigned to each character. Thus, the Genius of Music, who speaks the prologue, is accompanied by two *gravicembani*, probably misprinted for *clavicembali*, or harpsichords; Orpheus by two *contrabassi di viola*, or bass-viols; Eurydice by ten *viole di brazzo*, or tenor viols; a chorus of nymphs and shepherds by an *arpa doppia*, or harp with double strings; Hope by two *violini piccoli alla Francese*, a phrase which supports the claim of the French to the invention of the violin; Proserpina by three *bassi da gamba*, an instrument which has given place to the violoncello; and Pluto by four trombones. The overture is a very short

prelude in harmony of five parts, for a trumpet and other instruments, which is directed to be played three times before the rising of the curtain. Then the prologue is delivered in recitative; its purport being to explain the argument of the piece and bespeak the attention of the audience. The opera begins by a speech in recitative by a shepherd, followed by a chorus in five parts, accompanied by all the instruments. Other choruses are directed to be accompanied in different ways—by guitars, violins, and flutes. There are no airs for a single voice, but recitatives, choruses, trios, and duets make up the piece, which concludes with a dance to a tune called a *moresca*, probably an original Moorish air. It is a lively strain, with a well-marked but peculiar rhythm, four times repeated, and ingeniously carried into different major and minor keys.*

Monteverde's management of his orchestra, in the very infancy of this branch of the art, is worthy of particular notice; as he appears to have anticipated the principle of instrumentation which has been since adopted by the greatest dramatic composers, though it is now too much disregarded. In an Italian opera of the modern school, every instrument in the band is kept constantly at work, from the overture to the finale. The most tender and pathetic air or duet is accompanied, as well as a joyous or martial

* For specimens of the music of this and other primitive Italian operas, see the Histories of Burney and Hawkins.

chorus, by violins, tenors, violoncellos, double-basses, flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, trombones, and drums. What can be more absurd than this? The variety and effect of the orchestra are destroyed by such an indiscriminate and unmeaning use of all its resources. It was not thus that Gluck and Mozart, the models of dramatic instrumentation, employed the powers of the orchestra. Look into the opera scores of these great masters, and we shall hardly find the two scenes, or two movements, accompanied in the same manner. The different kinds of instruments are used in every variety of combination, so as to produce an endless diversity of effect, and to allow the united strength of the orchestra, when called into action, to produce its full impression on the audience. That system required learning, skill, and delicacy; the method now in vogue is a mere cloak for ignorance.

The following account of the first public performance of dramatic music, at Rome, is given by Pietro della Valla, an agreeable musical writer of that time. "My master, Quagliati, was an excellent maestro de capella, who introduced a new species of music into the churches of Rome, not only in compositions for a single voice, but for two, three, four, and very often more voices in chorus, singing together. And the music of my *cart*, or moveable stage, composed by the same Quagliati, and performed in masks through the streets of Rome during the Carnival of 1606, was the first

dramatic action, or representation in music, which had ever been heard in that city. Though no more than five voices, or five instruments, were employed, the number which an ambulating cart could contain, yet these afforded great variety: as, beside the dialogue of single voices, sometimes two, or three, or all the five, sang together, which had an excellent effect. The music of this piece, as may be seen in the copies of it which were afterwards printed, though dramatic, was not all in simple recitative, which would have been tiresome, but ornamented with beautiful passages, and movements in measure, without deviating, however, from the true theatrical style; on which account it pleased extremely, as was manifest from the prodigious concourse of people it drew after it, who, instead of being tired, heard it five or six times over. There were even some who continued to follow our cart to ten or a dozen different places where it stopped, and never quitted us so long as we remained in the street, which was from four o'clock in the afternoon till after midnight."

The first public performance of musical pieces in a regular theatre, took place at Venice, in 1637, when the opera of *Andromeda*, written by Benedetto Ferrari, and composed by Francesco Manello, was brought upon the stage, in the theatre of Santo Cassiano, in a splendid manner, at the expense of the poet, who, for that purpose, collected a company of the best singers in Italy; a remark-

able instance of spirit and enterprise. In the following year, *La Maga Fulminata*, by the same poet and composer, was performed in the same manner, and at the expense of the former. Between 1641 and 1649, there were upwards of thirty different operas performed in the several theatres of Venice, the composers of which were Monteverde, Manello, Cavalli, Sacrati, Ferrari, Fonte, Marazzoli, and Rovetta.

The most celebrated opera of that period was the *Orontea* of Marc' Antonio Cesti, which was first performed at Venice in 1649, and appears to have kept possession of the stage, in various cities, for nearly forty years. The music of these early operas is almost all lost, as very few of them were printed; but Dr. Burney gives a scene from this opera of *Orontea*, which was found in the music-book of the celebrated painter, Salvator Rosa, in his own handwriting. This scene, when compared with the specimens of Peri or Monteverde, exhibits a striking improvement in dramatic music. The air, which is in E minor, and in the time of three minims, is flowing, expressive, and modern in its effect, from the free use of the diminished seventh both in the melody and harmony. The recitative is *parlante*, and divested of the formal closes used by the older composers: indeed it differs very little from the recitative of the present day. And the concluding air in D major, is bold and spirited, with a firm moving bass very much in the manner of Handel. Of Cesti little more is known, than that he was ad-

mitted into the Pope's chapel as a tenor singer in 1660, and produced several other operas, which had great success. He composed a great number of cantatas, many of which are still extant. Cavalli was at this period a prolific composer of operas, the most celebrated of which are *Giasone* and *Erismena*. From what remains of his music, it seems to have been inferior to that of Cesti.

Venice appears to have taken the lead among all the cities of Italy, in respect to the musical drama. Between 1637, when *Andromeda* was produced, and 1700, we are told by Riccoboni, that three hundred and fifty operas were performed there. Operas were generally represented daily, and in six different theatres, all open at once. There was no public opera-house at Rome until 1671, nor at Bologna till 1680. In that year we have an account of the performance of the opera of *Berenice*, composed by Domenico Freschi, at Padua, in a style of splendour which reduces to insignificance the utmost achievements of scenic display, even in the present age of *spectacle*. In this opera (of the poetical or musical qualities of which there is no record) there were choruses of a hundred virgins and a hundred soldiers; a hundred horsemen in steel armour, a hundred performers on trumpets, cornets, sackbuts, drums, flutes, and other instruments, on horseback and on foot; two lions led by two Turks, and two elephants led by two others; Berenice's triumphal car drawn by four horses, and six other cars with spoils and prisoners drawn by twelve horses. Among the

scenes in the first act, was a vast plain with two triumphal arches; another with pavilions and tents; a square, prepared for the entrance of the triumphal procession, and a forest for the chace. In the second act there were the royal apartments of Berenice's temple of vengeance; a spacious court, with a view of the prison, and a covered way, along which passed a train of carriages. In the third act there were, the royal dressing-room, magnificently furnished; stables containing a hundred live horses; a portico adorned with tapestry; and a superb palace seen in perspective. In the course of the piece there were representations of hunting the boar, the stag, and the bear. And to conclude the whole, an enormous globe descended from the sky, which divided itself into lesser globes, suspended in the air, on which were seen allegorical figures of Fame, Honour, Nobility, Virtue, and Glory. We find many descriptions of exhibitions of this kind, chiefly at Venice, but none of them seem to have rivalled the splendour of *Berenice*.

The most curious account that we have met with of one of these exhibitions is given in a note by the English translator of the Abbé Raguenet's *Parallèle des Italiens et des François, en ce qui regarde la Musique et les Opéra*, published in 1704. It was the *Intermezzo* (or Interlude) of *Hell*, in the opera of *Nerone Infante*, performed in the Capranica theatre at Rome. "At the sound of a horrid symphony, consisting of horns, great serpents, and regals,

part of the floor of the stage opened and discovered a scene underneath, representing several caverns full of infernal spirits, that flew about in a prodigious number, discharging fire and smoke at their mouths and nostrils. At some distance, too, there were seen a great number of damned spirits suffering under their various torments; and on another side was discovered the river Lethe with Charon's boat, on board of which was Mercury, Charon, and the soul of one who had died for love. Upon their landing a prodigious monster appeared, whose mouth opening, to the great horror of the spectators, covered the front wings and the remaining part of the stage. Within his jaws there appeared a throne composed of fire, and a number of monstrous serpents, on which Pluto sat, with a crown of fire on his head, and habited in other royal ornaments of the same nature. The singer who performed this part was one of those deep basses which, in the author's opinion, are so rarely found in Italy. After Cupid had demanded justice of Pluto upon those old women who, in the preceding intermede, had cut his wings for making Agrippina, Nero's mother, in love, and several other passages belonging to this intermede, the mouth of the monster closed; at which instant Cupid, endeavouring to fly off, was arrested by a little devil, who seized on his foot; upon which Cupid, giving himself a littl turn, shot the devil with one of his darts; whereupon the devil was transformed into a curling

smoke, that disappeared by degrees, and Cupid escaped. After this the great monster, expanding his wings, began to move very slowly towards the audience; under his body appeared great multitudes of devils, who formed themselves into a ballet, and plunged one after the other into the opening of the floor before mentioned; out of which a prodigious quantity of fire and smoke was discharged. After this, the great monster being got as far as the music-room,* and while all the spectators were intent upon what was doing, and began to fear he would come into the pit, he was in an instant transformed into an innumerable multitude of broad white butterflies, which flew all into the pit, and so low that some of them touched the hats of several of the spectators; at which some seemed diverted, and others were not a little terrified, till by degrees they lodged themselves on different parts of the theatre, and at length disappeared. During this circumstance, which sufficiently employed the eyes of the spectators, the stage was refitted, and the scene changed into a beautiful garden, with which the third act began. This representation was so extraordinary in its nature, so exactly performed, and so universally admired and applauded, that great numbers of foreigners came to Rome on purpose to behold it, and confessed, when they had seen it, that it far exceeded the expectations fame

* The orchestra.

had given them of it. And it must be confessed, it gave the spectators a more perfect instructive idea of hell than it is possible for the most artful flowing fancy to delineate. So that the author was not mistaken when he said that these sort of entertainments are *no less instructive* (!) than agreeable."

Towards the end of the seventeenth century a species of entertainment was introduced at Venice, which was for a short time in great vogue. It consisted of little dramas, in which the actors appeared on the stage without speaking. Scrolls descended from the roof upon their heads in succession, in which were written, in large letters, verses of songs, the airs of which were played by the orchestra, while the words were sung by the spectators; the performers on the stage, meanwhile, carrying on the action in dumb show. The spectators found it very amusing to sing, in this manner, the dialogue of the piece, but soon began, doubtless, to think it somewhat childish; for the "scroll-pieces" did not long remain in fashion. Sometimes pieces were performed, in which the characters were represented by wooden or wax figures on the stage, while the singers remained invisible behind the scenes. Some of the operas of Pistocchi (one of the most celebrated composers and singers of that day) were performed in this manner.

Our countryman Evelyn, in his *Diary*, gives some notices of the state of music at Venice in the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1645, he

says, "This night, having with my Lord Bruce taken our places before we went to the opera, where comedies and other plays are represented in recitative musiq by the most excellent musicians, vocal and instrumental, with variety of sceanes painted and contrived with no lesse art of perspective, and machines for flying in the aire, and other wonderful motions; taken together it is one of the most magnificent and expensive diversions the wit of man can invent. The history was Hercules in Lydia; the sceanes changed thirteen times. The famous voices, Anna Rencia, a Roman, and reputed the best treble of women; but there was an eunuch who in my opinion surpassed her; also a Genoese that sung an incomparable base. They held us by the eyes and eares till two in the morning." After giving a description of the pastimes during the carnival of 1646, he says, "The comedians have liberty, and the operas are open; witty pasquils are thrown about, and the mountebanks have their stages at every corner. The diversion which chiefly took me up was three noble operas, where were excellent voices and musiq, the most celebrated of which was the famous Anna Rencia, whom we invited to a fish dinner after four daies in Lent, when they had given over at the theatre. Accompanied with an eunuch whom she brought with her, she entertained us with rare musiq, both of them singing to an harpsichord. It growing late, a gentleman of Venice came for her to show her the

galleys now ready to sayle for Candia. This entertainment produced a second, given us by the English consul of the merchants, inviting us to his house, when he had the Genoeze, the most celebrated base in Italy, who was one of the late opera band. This diversion held us so late at night that, conveying a gentlewoman who had supped with us to her gondola at the usual place of landing, we were shot at by two carbines from out another gondola, in which was a noble Venetian and his courtezan unwilling to be disturbed, which made us run and fetch other weapons, not knowing what the matter was, till we were informed of the danger we might run by pursuing it further."

The Italian singers, from the very infancy of the musical drama, attained that superiority over those of other countries which they have always preserved. Della Valle, who wrote in 1640, commemorates a number of vocal performers, of both sexes, who flourished during his time. "Who," he says, "can hear without rapture Signora Leonora sing to her own accompaniment on the arch-lute, which she touches in so fanciful and masterly a manner? And who will venture to say which is the better performer, she or her sister Caterina? Nor is there any one who, like me, has seen and heard Signora Adriana, their mother, when, in her youth, she sailed in a felucca, near the Pausilippan grotto, with her golden harp in her hand, but must confess that in our times these shores have been inhabited by

sirens who are not only beautiful and tuneful, but good and virtuous." Among other eminent female singers of that day he mentions FRANCESCA CACCINI, the daughter of the composer Giulio Caccini, who had been for many years the admiration of Florence, not only for her talents in singing and composition, but for her Latin and Italian poetry. Not less famous was CATERINA MARTINELLI, who died at the age of eighteen, to the general regret of Italy. A splendid monument to her memory was erected by the Duke of Mantua, in the church of the Carmelites in that city, with the fine inscription, "Nomen mundo, Deo vivat anima." Among the principal male singers were PISTOCCHI, already mentioned, and FRANCESCO GROSSI, called *Syface*, from his excellent performance of the character of Syphax. This singer was killed, when on a journey, in a quarrel with his postilion.

LEONORA BARONI, of Mantua, was the most celebrated singer of that period. She is not only spoken of in the above enthusiastic language by Della Valle, but is described by Bayle, in his dictionary, as having been one of the finest singers in the world. A whole volume of poems was published in her praise with this title, "Applausi poetici alle glorie della Signora Leonora Baroni;" and, among the Latin poems of Milton, there are no fewer than three entitled, "Ad Leonoram Romæ canentem." Milton frequented the musical entertainments of the Cardinal Barberini; and it

was there, no doubt, that he heard this lady sing. The following fine eulogy on Leonora Baroni is contained in a discourse on the music of the Italians, written by Mr. Maugars (an ecclesiastic, and a musician of extraordinary attainments,) and quoted by Bayle, under the article *Baroni*. "Leonora Baroni is endowed with fine parts; she understands music perfectly well, and even composes, which makes her mistress of what she sings, and gives her the most exact pronunciation, and just expression of the sense of her words. She does not pretend to beauty, neither is she disagreeable, or a coquette. She sings with a bold and generous modesty, and an agreeable gravity; her voice reaches a large compass of notes, and is true, full, and harmonious; she softens and raises it without straining or making grimaces. Her raptures and sighs are free from wantonness; her looks have nothing impudent, nor does she, in her gestures, overstep a virgin modesty. In passing from one key to another she shows sometimes the divisions of the enharmonic and chromatic kind with so much art and sweetness, that everybody is ravished with that fine and difficult method of singing. She has no need of any person to assist her with a theorbo or viol, one of which is necessary to make her singing complete, for she herself plays perfectly well on both those instruments. In short, I have had the good fortune to hear her several times sing above thirty different airs, with second and third stanzas com-

posed by herself. I must not forget to tell you, that one day she did me the particular favour to sing with her mother and sister. Her mother played upon the lute, her sister upon the harp, and herself upon the theorbo.* This concert, composed of three fine voices, and of three different instruments, so powerfully transported my senses, and threw me into such raptures, that I forgot that I was mortal, and thought myself already among the angels, enjoying the felicity of the blessed."

* The lute and the theorbo are now obsolete instruments. The lute resembled the modern guitar, and was played upon in the same way: but was larger and much more sonorous. The theorbo was in the form of a large lute, from which it differed in having eight bass or thick strings, twice as long as those of the lute. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the lute was the favourite chamber instrument throughout Europe; and in the beginning of dramatic music the recitatives were accompanied by the theorbo (also called the arch-lute) before the harpsichord was used for that purpose. Indeed, the theorbo, from the length of its strings, produced such soft and sustained tones, that it was preferred, by many, to the harpsichord, as an accompaniment. There was a theorbo in the orchestra of our Italian Opera till the end of Handel's management.

CHAPTER II.

The musical drama in France—Mysteries—Queen of Navarre—Italian opera brought into France—Italian companies in Paris—Isabella Andreini—Lulli—Opera-ballets—Quinault—Fontenelle—La Fontaine—Lulli's music—French singers—French musical drama till the time of Rameau.

In France, as in Italy, the regular musical drama was preceded by mysteries, masques, and other exhibitions, performed in the churches on solemn religious festivals, or in the palaces of princes, for the amusement of their visitors and guests. Many of these are described by French writers; but they are so similar to those which have been already mentioned as prevailing in Italy, that it is unnecessary to enter into any details respecting them. Music generally made a part of them, as well as action, machinery, and dancing. Fontenelle, in his *Histoire du Théâtre Français*, gives a particular account of the mystery of *The Passion*, written by the bishop of Angers, about the middle of the fifteenth century. "This piece," he says, "was a kind of *opera;* for, after the baptism of our

Saviour, God the Father speaks; and it is recommended that his words should be pronounced very audibly and distinctly, and at once, with three voices, treble, counter-tenor, and bass, all well in tune, and that the whole scene should be sung in harmony." In a sacred drama, performed on a high festival of the Church, and listened to with reverence by a devout assembly, words, supposed to be uttered by the Supreme Being, might be delivered without indecorum; and this manner of harmonizing them for a plurality of voices indicated much grandeur of conception on the part of the musician. Every musical tone is a harmonious combination of simple sounds; and, by further making the divine voice a harmonious combination of musical tones, an effect of superhuman majesty and beauty would be imparted to it. To produce this impression, it must have been necessary to lay aside all the contrivances of figure and imitation, and to make the harmony consist of plain counterpoint, every syllable being uttered by all the voices at once.*

The celebrated Marguerite de Valois, queen of Navarre, composed mysteries and moralities, which were represented by the ladies of her court.

* This expedient has been used by the Chevalier Neukomm, in his Oratorio of *Mount Sinai*, in which the commandments are delivered from the holy mountain, in *canto fermo* of four choral parts, accompanied by trombones, all in plain counterpoint. The effect is grand and awful.

Several of her dramatic pieces are contained in the collection of her works, published in 1547, under the punning title of *Marguerites de la Marguerite des Princesses, très-illustre Reyne de Navarre.* They consist of four mysteries, a comedy, and a farce. "As to the mysteries," says a French critic, "if they contain ridiculous things, it is the fault of the age and the species of composition. The mysteries were the tragedies of those days. The Italians had not yet taught us to compose dramas of a more regular and interesting kind. The ancient Greek tragedies were not yet translated; and in this infancy of our theatre, there were none of these pieces in which we find more talent, delicacy, and nature, than in those of this princess. They are of moderate length, and are not loaded with the multiplicity of characters usual in the mysteries of the preceding age. The four pieces, *The Nativity*, *The Adoration of the Kings*, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, and *The Flight into Egypt*, are connected with each other, and the action of each piece may be supposed to have taken place within twenty-four hours, the time prescribed by the law of the unities. If it were still the custom to perform pieces of this kind, we could not do better than translate into modern French the mysteries of the queen of Navarre."

The French writers admit that they owe the establishment of the opera to the Italians. Rinuccini, who went to France in the suite of Mary

of Medicis, on her marriage with Henry IV. first introduced Italian music into that country. The first Italian company of performers appeared in Paris, in 1577. They attracted such multitudes, (says an old writer,) that the four best preachers in Paris had not such numerous assemblies when they preached. The ecclesiastics made loud complaints; and in a few weeks the parliament ordered the theatre to be closed. The company obtained letters-patent from the king, authorizing their establishment; but the parliament refused to ratify these letters. By an express order of the king, however, they resumed their performances; but the troubles of the kingdom obliged them to leave it and return to Italy. When Henry IV. returned from his expedition to Savoy, he brought another Italian company, who remained at Paris only for two years. Their principal actress was Isabella Andreini, a member of the academy of the Intenti at Florence. This lady was no less remarkable for her virtue and her literary attainments, than for her talents on the stage. Her manners and conversation gave additional charms to her beauty; and the regret caused by her departure from France is commemorated by the verses of several of the poets of that day.

Another Italian company was brought to Paris, by Cardinal Mazarin, during the minority of Louis XIV. in the year 1645. The first opera which they performed was *La Finta Pazza*, an

opera by Giulio Strozzi. But Italian operas seem to have been little encouraged at that time. French pieces called *ballets*, though they appear to have had words, as well as dancing and music, were the favourite amusement of the court; and it was in composing the music of these pieces, that LULLI first brought his talents into notice.

This celebrated musician, the son of a Tuscan peasant, was born in 1633. Having shown a disposition for music, he received some instructions in the rudiments of the art, from a priest. The Chevalier de Guise, when on his travels in Italy, had been requested by Mademoiselle de Montpensier, a niece of Louis XIV. to procure for her a handsome Italian boy, as a page; and, happening to see young Lulli, at Florence, he chose him for that purpose, on account of his wit and vivacity, and his skill in playing on the guitar. The lady, however, not liking his appearance, for he was far from handsome, sent him into her kitchen, where he was made a *sous-marmiton*, or under-scullion. At this time he was ten years old.

In his leisure hours, he used to be constantly scraping on a wretched violin which he had contrived to pick up; and some person of taste, who happened to hear him, having told the princess that he had a great talent for music, she had him regularly taught to play upon the violin. He was soon admitted into the king's band, and so much distinguished himself as a musician, that he was

placed at its head, and employed to compose the music of the court ballets, in which the king and other great personages used to dance. One of these pieces was *Alcidiane*, performed in 1658, in which his majesty himself was one of the dancers. The performance not being ready to begin at the proper time, the king sent message after message to Lulli, to tell him to make haste. At last he sent to say he was weary of waiting, and desired that the piece should begin immediately. The messenger told Lulli that the king was out of all patience and in a violent passion: but the musician, wholly intent on his preparations, said coolly, "His majesty can wait." The king laughed at the answer, and quietly waited till Lulli was ready. The composer preserved during his life this plain and blunt humour, and used a freedom of speech which frequently annoyed the courtiers, but never seems to have offended the king himself, whose favour for Lulli was uninterrupted.

In 1660, the celebrated Pierre Corneille produced his tragedy of *Andromeda*, a sort of opera, containing splendid machinery, dancing, and music. It was performed before the court, and received with great applause. Pegasus was represented by a real horse, a thing which had never before been seen on the stage in France. A singular method was taken to make the horse exhibit the proper degree of martial ardour. He was subjected to a severe fast, and, when he was brought upon the

stage, a man, placed opposite to him, out of sight of the audience, was winnowing oats. The hungry animal neighed, pawed the ground, curvetted, and acted his part with such "good discretion," that he contributed greatly to the success of the piece.

These opera-ballets continued to be the entertainment of the court for a few years longer, till the regular French opera derived its being from the celebrated Quinault.

Philip Quinault was born at Paris in 1636; but we have no account of his family. His genius for poetry displayed itself at an early age; and, before he was twenty years old, he had written several comedies, which were performed with success. His friends, however, having wisely advised him not to trust to poetry for a livelihood, he placed himself under an eminent advocate, and made himself capable, in a few years, of exercising that profession. One day this advocate desired him to conduct one of his clients, a gentleman of some consequence, to the house of the judge who was to report to the court, according to the French mode of procedure, the merits of a cause in which he was engaged. The judge not being at home, and not being expected till late, Quinault proposed to the gentleman to go to the theatre and see a new comedy, promising to get him a good place. The play that evening was a new piece of Quinault's, called *L'Amant Indiscret*. No sooner did the young

author appear in the theatre, than he was surrounded by people of the highest quality, who congratulated him on the merit of his comedy, which, they said, they had come to see for the third or fourth time. The gentleman was surprised; still more so when he saw an excellent comedy performed amidst the applause of the pit and boxes; and most of all, when, having returned to the judge, he heard Quinault explain the points of his case with the utmost clearness, and support his cause by such solid reasons, that the difficulties started by the judge were entirely removed.

He continued, for many years, to produce a series of dramatic pieces, chiefly tragedies, which were well received by the public; but some of them were severely attacked by the critics, especially Boileau, who for some unexplained reason, seems to have taken a violent dislike to him; for, though Quinault's pieces were sufficiently open to criticism in various respects, yet Boileau's abuse of them was immoderate and indiscriminate. Boileau was much censured, even in his own time, for this conduct; and it is now universally admitted that he did Quinault great injustice. His famous couplet,

> "Si je pense exprimer un auteur sans defaut,
> La raison dit Virgile, et la rime Quinault,"

as well as his

> "L'or de Virgile, et le clinquant du Tasse,"

are quoted now only as instances of the sacrifice of truth to point and antithesis.

It was not, however, till Quinault became associated with Lulli in the composition of operas that he produced those pieces which have rendered his name illustrious. The first of their joint productions was *Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus*, performed in 1672. This was a mere pastoral ballet. But their first regular opera, *Cadmus et Hermione*, was performed in the public theatre of the Palais Royal in April 1673, having been previously represented with great success in the private court-theatre. In this piece he introduced some burlesque scenes, which were considered unsuitable to the style of the lyrical drama; it then being, in France, appropriated entirely to mythological and heroic subjects. He was accused of having imitated the Italians, who mixed buffoonery with their most serious subjects; a poor resource, said the critics, which was worse than even monotony and baldness. Quinault, influenced by these strictures, did not admit any comic characters or incidents into his subsequent operas.

Lulli, finding that Quinault had so great a talent for lyrical poetry, proposed that they should enter into an engagement, that Quinault should write an opera every year, for which Lulli should pay him four thousand livres. This engagement was accordingly entered into; and the music (we believe) of all Quinault's operas was composed by Lulli.

Quinault, notwithstanding his reputation as a poet, did not abandon the profession of the law.

He married the rich widow of a merchant, and afterwards purchased the office of an auditor of the chamber of accounts, the duties of which he performed till his death. He died on 29th November 1688. It is said that, during his last illness, he was extremely penitent, on account of the voluptuous tendency of various parts of his writings.

During the lifetime of Lulli and Quinault, the music of the one was the best that had ever been heard in France, while the other appeared in an age of great dramatic writers. It is well observed by La Harpe, that Quinault's great mistake and misfortune were the calling his pieces musical tragedies instead of operas. Had it not been for this, he would not have been looked upon as an unsuccessful rival of Racine, or have offended classical critics with the little resemblance those pieces had to the dramas of the ancients, or the regular tragedies of the moderns. But the reputation of Lulli has fallen in proportion as that of Quinault has risen. Voltaire, in his *Siècle de Louis Quatorze*, first published in 1749, said: "Quinault was celebrated for his beautiful lyric poetry, and the gentleness with which he opposed the unjust satires of Boileau. His poetry was greatly superior to the music of Lulli. It will always be read; and Lulli, except in a few of his recitatives, can no longer be borne. However, it was long believed that Quinault entirely owed his favour to Lulli. Time appreciates all things."

Quinault's dramatic works are well known to the readers of French poetry. All his lyrical dramas are full of beauties; but *Atys*, *Phaeton*, *Isis*, and *Armide*, have been considered as the best. *Atys*, which was produced in 1676, was the finest opera that had yet appeared, and had an astonishing success. On the day of its first performance, the doors were forced, at ten o'clock in the morning, by persons who wished to secure places, and, before mid-day, the theatre was completely crowded. It did not disappoint the expectations of the public; though it affords several specimens of that "morale lubrique" so justly censured by Boileau;* as in these lines of a duet,

"Il faut souvent, pour être heureux,
Qu'il en coûte un peu d'innocence."

The king having asked Madame de Maintenon which was her favourite opera, she said it was *Atys*. "Ah," said the gallant monarch, "Atys is a happy man." It was at a performance of this opera that Boileau said to the boxkeeper, "Put me in a place where I shall not be able to hear the words; I like Lulli's music very much, but have a sovereign contempt for Quinault's verses." Notwithstanding the dislike of the Aristarchus of the age, however, *Atys* continued to please the public, and for a long time kept possession of the theatre.

* "Et tous ces lieux communs de morale lubrique,
Que Lulli rechauffa des sons de sa musique."

Armide was produced in 1686, and was the last of Quinault's works. It is said that Lulli insisted on his writing the last act five times over; and that for this reason he conceived a dislike to writing for the stage. Others ascribe to devotion his resolution to abandon dramatic composition. This opera was at first coldly received, the music not having pleased so much as usual. Lulli, who was so passionately fond of his own compositions, that (as he himself confessed) he would have killed any one who said they were bad, had it performed for his own gratification, he himself forming the whole audience. This odd circumstance having been reported to the king, he thought that the opera could not be bad if Lulli himself had so good an opinion of it. Having, therefore, ordered it to be performed before him, he was charmed with it; and then both the court and the public changed their opinion of its merits. Nothing can be finer than the subject of this opera, affording, as it does, ample scope for impassioned poetry, striking situations, and the accessories of beautiful scenery and stage decorations. On this account it has often been chosen by dramatists, but none of them appear to have treated it so happily as Quinault. The last scene in the second act, consisting of the soliloquy of Armida, when she is about to stab Rinaldo in his sleep, and is prevented by the sudden influence of a passion of which she is as yet unconscious, is exquisitely beautiful. The fourth act is comparatively feeble;

but the fifth (which, unlike the operas of the present day) is terminated by a soliloquy of the heroine, is full of magnificent poetry. It was by this noble production that Quinault terminated his brilliant career; and he had the uncommon felicity of making his last work his masterpiece. *Armide* was afterwards reset by Rameau; and, more recently, by Gluck, with whose music it is still performed in France and Germany.

During the time that Lulli was employed in composing the music of Quinault's operas, he appears to have set only two others, *Psyche* and *Bellerophon,* both by Fontenelle, the first of which was performed in 1678, and the second in 1679. They are both to be found in the works of that author. *Psyche* is an elegant poem, in which the rise and progress of the tender passion, in a young and innocent heart, are represented with much sweetness and delicacy. It is remarkable that the scene in which the impending fate of Psyche (condemned by the oracle to be sacrificed in order to stop the ravages of a monstrous serpent) is lamented by her rustic companions, is written in Italian—"Deh, piangete al pianto mio"—and sung by two women and a man.* *Bellerophon* was

* This opera appears to have been in great favour with the public. The author himself, in one of his "Lettres Galantes," speaks of it, in the person of a lady describing the impression its performance had made on a young girl whom she had taken to the opera the evening before. The passage is so full of that

performed in 1679, and was meant as a compliment to Louis XIV. on his having given peace to Europe.

lightness and grace of expression for which Fontenelle was so remarkable, that it cannot fail to be read with pleasure. "Figurez-vous ce que c'est que l'opéra au sortir d'un couvent. Quelle différence de l'harmonie des réligieuses à celle-là! enfin quelle passage de l'un de ces deux mondes à l'autre! On jouait *Psyche;* je vous assure que Mademoiselle de V—— était Psyche même, enlevée comme elle dans un séjour enchanté, aussi surprise, aussi charmée qu'elle. Pour moi, au lieu de regarder la Psyche du théâtre je ne réğardai que celle de notre loge, qui certainement la représentait mieux, outre qu'elle était bien plus jolie ; et si j'avais été l'Amour, j'aurais deputé le Zéphyr à celle-ci pour me l'amêner, et j'aurais renvoyé l'autre chez ses parents. A l'arrêt de mort de Psyche, et à toute cette pompe funèbre qui le suit, la demoiselle pleura après s'être longtemps contrainte. L'honneur apparemment avait beaucoup combattu dans sa petite âme ; mais enfin l'honneur, qui n'est pas accoutumé à être le plus fort, ceda, et le mouchoir fut inondé de larmes. Comme tout cet endroit-là est long, elle voulut s'en aller, ou se cacher au fond de la loge, parce qu'elle s'imaginait que toute l'assemblée avait les yeux sur elle, et qu'elle était déshonorée pour jamais. Nous eumes bien de la peine à la rassurer ; et tandis qu'on chantait le '*Deh, piangete al pianto mio,*' que tous les instruments de l'orchestre tiraient de longs soupirs, et que les flûtes poussaient mille sanglots, c'était des éclats de rire dans notre loge que nous ne pouvions retenir, et qui nous eussent à bon faire passer pour fous. Je lui reprochai qu'elle était bien sensible, et elle me répondait que ce n'était que de la pitié ; mais quand les scenes de Psyche et de l'Amour vinrent, de bonne foi elle ne le fut pas moins ; et il n'était plus question de pitié. Un air de joie douce et vive était peint dans son visage ; et vous jugez bien que sa beauté n'y perdait pas ; et enfin, pressée par le plaisir qu'elle ressentait, il fallait qu'elle se soulageât par un

Lulli's last opera was *Acis et Galatée*, written by a forgotten poet of the name of Campistron.* It was performed in 1687.

soupir, peutêtre la première de sa vie, et sans doute d'un trop grand prix pour être donné à une fiction. J'étudiai tous les mouvements que la nature produisit en elle; je lui vis faire, pendant toute eette pièee, qui est assez variée, eomme un petit eours de sentiment, et je n'en eonnais guère dont son eœur n'ait fait l'épreuve dans les trois heures que nous fûmes là. Je vous le garantis pour être d'une assez bonne trempe, et je ne déséspere pas que dans peu nous n'ayons d'autres nouvelles à vous en donner. Au sortir de là, nous la menâmes souper ehez madame votre sœur. Le repas fut des plus propres, et la eompagnie fort agréable, eependant elle rêva toujours. Elle ne s'était point eneore remise de toutes les petites agitations qu'elle avait essuyées; la musique remplissait eneore ses oreilles, Psyehe et l'Amour n'étaient point sortis de son esprit. Nous la priâmes bien de ne pas trouver mauvais de se voir servie de laquais que ne ressemblaient guère à des Zéphyr; et le soir que je la ramenai jusques dans sa ehambre, je lui dis que si je ne la laissai pas dans ee moment—là au milieu d'une troupe de Nymphes, du moins je lui pouvais promettre qu'elle habiterait toute la nuit dans le palais enehanté, et qu'elle serait Psyehe plus de vingt fois. Elle m'avoua le lendemain qu'elle l'avait été; mais elle ne voulut point m'avouer qu'elle eût vu un grand jeune Amour bien fait, qui lui eût dit les plus tendres ehoses du monde. Cependant quel moyen d'être Psyehe sans l'Amour? Je vous laisse à juger si eela est possible."

* Campistron wrote an opera ealled *Achille et Polixene*, whieh was set to musie by Colasse, and performed in 1668. Its failure produeed the following pungent epigram :—

" Entre Campistron et Colasse
Grand débat au Parnasse,
Sur ce que l'opéra n'a pas un sort heureux;

Lulli, in the course of his musical career, had become so great a favourite of the king, that his majesty had granted him letters of nobility : a sort of distinction somewhat similar to that of being knighted in this country. Somebody, by way of mortifying Lulli, told him that it was lucky for him that the king had exempted him from the necessity of obtaining his nobility in the common way, by having first been appointed one of his majesty's secretaries—an appointment which he could not have got, as the king's secretaries would not have received him into their body. Lulli was piqued at this, but said nothing for some time. In 1681, Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, containing a burlesque Turkish interlude, with music composed by Lulli, was performed before the court at St. Germain. Lulli himself played the part of the Mufti, which he acted and sang to the admiration and delight of the audience. The king, who had been excessively amused, paid Lulli many compliments on his performance. Lulli seized the opportunity : "Please your majesty," he said, "I have been anxious for the honour of being one of your secretaries, but I understand they would not receive me." "Not receive you ?" said Louis, "upon my word it would be doing them a great deal of honour.

De son mauvais succès nul ne se croit coupable,
L'un dit que la musique est plate et misérable,
L'autre, que la conduite et les vers sont affreux ;
Mais le grand Apollon, toûjours juge équitable,
Trouve qu'ils ont raison tous deux."

Go and talk to the chancellor about it." Lulli went immediately to M. le Tellier; and the report spread that the musician was going to be made a royal secretary. There was a great commotion, and loud complaints among the people in office that a player and buffoon should be admitted into their honourable fraternity. Even M. Louvois, the minister, taxed Lulli with his impudence, which, he said, by no means became a man who had no other recommendation but that of making people laugh. "Why, what the devil," cried Lulli, "you would do as much, if you were able!" The king's will, however, was expressed in a way which silenced all opposition, and Lulli got the appointment. On the day of his reception, he gave a grand dinner to the official gentlemen whom he had joined. In the evening his guests went to the theatre, when his *Triomphe de l'Amour* was performed, and it was amusing to see, seated on the benches nearest the stage, two or three rows of grave personages, in black cloaks and big wigs, listening, with serious faces, to the minuets and gavots of their new colleague the musician. M. de Louvois himself soon laid aside his ill-humour; and next time he met Lulli in the midst of a crowd of courtiers at Versailles, he called out to him laughingly, "Good day, brother!" Lulli, besides being a distinguished artist, was wealthy, and of irreproachable character: and, as the post was one which it was customary to give as a sinecure, and a mere mark of honour, it

is impossible to think that, in his case, it was improperly bestowed.

The king having had a dangerous illness in 1686, Lulli composed a *Te Deum* on his recovery, which was performed in the church of the Feuillans, on the 8th of January, 1687. In beating the time with a cane, he struck his toe so severely that the hurt, probably from a bad habit of body, caused a mortification. In place of having the part amputated, which might have saved him, he listened to the promises of some quacks who undertook to cure him without this expedient; and the Princes de Vendôme, who had a great regard for him, offered them four thousand pistoles if they cured him, and lodged the money in the hands of a banker. But all their attempts were vain; and his case became evidently hopeless. His confessor refused to give him absolution, unless he burned his opera of *Achille et Polixene,* which he was then preparing for the stage. He consented, and the manuscript was committed to the flames. Some days afterwards, when he seemed a little better, one of the young princes came to see him. "What, Baptiste," cried the prince, "have you been such a fool as to burn your opera?"—"Hush, my lord," whispered Lulli, "I have got a copy of it." It is said, however, that in his last moments he showed sincere penitence and a strong sense of religion. He died on the 22nd March, 1687, in the 54th year of his age. He was plain in his appearance and rough in his man-

ners, but honest and good-natured. His greatest failing was his fondness for wine and money. He left a fortune of 630,000 livres, an enormous sum in those days. He married the daughter of Michael Lambert, an eminent musician, by whom he had three sons and three daughters, whom he left in possession of sufficient wealth and powerful friends. Two of his sons were also musicians. They composed, in conjunction, the music to the opera of *Zephyr et Flore*, performed in 1688; also, two other operas, called *Orphée et Alcide*.

Between the death of Lulli and the end of the century, several operas were composed by Colasse, a musician of small reputation. One of these was *Thetis et Pelée*, written by Fontenelle, and performed in 1690 with little success. In the year 1750, M. d'Auvergne undertook to compose new music to this opera, and informed Fontenelle of his intention. "You do me a great deal of honour," said the veteran poet, "but it is sixty years since this opera was performed, and nobody told me then that its failure was the fault of the musician." M. d'Auvergne persisted in his design; and the opera, with his new music, was very favourably received. When it was performed, Fontenelle sat in the same box in which he had been at its first representation, sixty years before, after having dined with two friends with whom he had also dined on the day of that first representation. He died in 1757, having reached within a month of a hundred years of age.

Colasse also composed the music of *Astrée*, a tragic opera, written by La Fontaine, and produced in 1691. A characteristic anecdote is related of this celebrated poet. At the first performance of this piece, he was sitting in a box behind some ladies who did not know him. They heard him constantly saying to himself, "wretched! detestable! trash!" until at length one of them, weary of his repeated murmurs, said to him, "O, sir, the piece is by no means bad—the author is a man of genius, the famous M. de la Fontaine."—"Well, ladies," said he, very coolly, "the piece is not worth a farthing, and this M. de la Fontaine whom you talk of is a blockhead—he tells you so himself." At the end of the first act he went away, and, going into an adjoining coffee-house, sat down in a corner and fell fast asleep. A gentleman of his acquaintance coming in, and seeing him, exclaimed, "What, M. de la Fontaine here! should he not be at the first representation of his opera?"—"I am just come from it," said La Fontaine, rousing himself and yawning. "I sat out the first act, but was so completely sick of it that I could not stay any longer. Really, the Parisians have a wonderful stock of patience!"

About this time was performed an opera ballet, called *Arethusa*, written by Danchet, and composed by Campra, one of Lulli's imitators. It had not much success: and as the author and composer, seeing it likely to fail, were considering how they

could support it by rendering it more attractive, "I know but one way," said a friend who heard their conversation,—"you must lengthen the dances and shorten the ladies' petticoats."

Lulli was the only French dramatic composer of any reputation, prior to the end of the seventeenth century. He may properly be called a French dramatic composer, notwithstanding his Italian birth: for, having spent his life in France, from the time he was ten years old, it is impossible to imagine that his taste or style could have been affected by the fleeting musical impressions he had received in his childhood. Voltaire, who wrote with equal confidence, if not with equal knowledge, upon all subjects, has some criticisms on Lulli's music, which may be considered not so much his own opinions as those which he was accustomed to hear. "It may be observed," he says, "that when Lulli, the true father of French music, came into France, the dramatic music of Italy was of the same grave, noble, and simple kind as that which we still admire in the recitatives of Lulli. And nothing can more resemble these recitatives than Luigi's famous motet, composed and universally admired in Italy about the same time; *Sunt breves mundi rosæ*. However, the poetry of Quinault animated the music, more than the music of Lulli animated the words. The genius of two such men, with great acting, was necessary to form such an exhibition, in some parts of *Atys*, *Armide*, and *Roland*, as neither antiquity nor

any contemporary people ever knew. The airs are not equal to the recitatives of these great scenes. They are short simple tunes, more in the style of our Noëls (Christmas Carols) and Venetian ballads, than opera songs. But such was the taste of the times. And the more artless the music, the more easily it was remembered." These remarks set out with the evident absurdity that Lulli had formed his style of French recitative on the dramatic music of Italy when he left that country at ten years old. Voltaire finds a resemblance between Lulli's recitatives and a *motet* of an Italian composer of that day: but the motet was a hymn, or anthem, for the church, in harmony of many parts, and had no sort of affinity to dramatic music. It is true that Lulli's recitative, which is a sort of drawling psalmody, tolerable to no ears but those of Frenchmen, may have some resemblance to church music; but it certainly is as unlike as possible to the *speaking* recitative of Cavalli or Cesti. As to Lulli's airs, so much undervalued in comparison with his recitatives, any musician of the present day, who makes this comparison, will form an opposite opinion. They are short and simple, but we have found some of them exceedingly smooth, flowing, natural, and more agreeable to modern taste than the airs of Rameau, the idol of the French at the time when Voltaire wrote these strictures.

Lulli contributed greatly to the improvement of instrumental music. He appears to have been the inventor of the overture to dramatic pieces, and was so successful in this species of composition, that even Handel, in his opera-overtures, took him for his model. He also increased the power of the orchestra by making use of kettle-drums and side-drums in the accompaniments of his choruses.

Our opinion of Lulli's genius must be enhanced by considering the wretched state of vocal and instrumental performance in his time. When he was placed at the head of the king's band, they could play nothing but what they had learned by heart; and it must have been by great exertion that he made them capable of executing the overtures and accompaniments of his operas. His vocal performers were equally unformed and ignorant; and he not only taught them to sing and to act, but was even obliged to give lessons to the dancers. He was the only instructor of the celebrated La Rochois, who was the *prima donna* in most of his pieces; and his other singers must have been equally ignorant, as they could have received no previous education in an art which he may be said, in so far as regards France, to have called into existence.

Among the singers of that period, who are mentioned by French writers, there are none whose names are worthy of being preserved on account of their talents. One of them, however, La Maupin,

the successor of La Rochois, may be noticed on account of her wild and lawless character, and the strangeness of her adventures. She was born in 1673, and married at a very early age, but soon ran away with a fencing-master, from whom she learned the use of the small sword. After remaining for some time at Marseilles, where she narrowly escaped the punishment of being burnt alive for setting fire to a convent, she went to Paris, appeared on the opera stage at the age of two-and-twenty, and was for a considerable time the reigning favourite of the day. Having on some occasion been affronted by Dumeni, a singer, she put on male attire, watched for him in the Place des Victoires, insisted on his drawing his sword and fighting her, and, on his refusing, caned him and took his watch and snuff-box. Next day, Dumeni having boasted in the opera-house that he had defended himself against three men who had attempted to rob him, she told the whole story, and produced his watch and snuff-box in proof of her having chastised him as a coward. Thevenard, another singer of note, was nearly treated in the same manner, and had no other way of escaping, but by publicly begging her pardon, after hiding himself in the Palais Royal for three weeks. At a ball given by Monsieur, the brother of Louis XIV., she appeared in men's clothes, and, having behaved impertinently to a lady, was called out by three of her friends.

Instead of avoiding the combat, by discovering her sex, she drew her sword and killed all the three; and then, returning very coolly to the ball-room, told the story to Monsieur, who obtained her pardon. After some other adventures, she went to Brussels, where she became mistress of the Elector of Bavaria. This prince, having quitted her for the countess of Arcos, sent her by that lady's husband a purse of 40,000 livres, with an order to quit Brussels. But this singular heroine threw the purse at the count's head, telling him it was a recompence worthy of such a contemptible scoundrel as himself. She afterwards returned to the Parisian stage, which she left in 1705. The conclusion of such a life is not the least extraordinary part of it. She became at last very devout; and, having recalled her husband, from whom she had been long separated, lived with him in a pious manner till her death, in 1707, at the age of thirty-four. Such is the history of this woman, given by Laborde and other writers; and, strange as it is, there seems no reason for doubting its truth.

Addison gives a lively description of the French opera at the beginning of the eighteenth century. "The music of the French," he says,* "is indeed very properly adapted to their pronunciation and accent, as their whole opera wonderfully favours the genius of such a gay airy people. The chorus

* Spectator, No. 29.

in which that opera abounds, gives the parterre frequent opportunities of joining in concert with the stage. This inclination of the audience to sing along with the actors, so prevails with them, that I have sometimes known the performer on the stage do no more, in a celebrated song, than the clerk of a parish church, who serves only to raise the psalm, and is afterwards drowned in the music of the congregation. Every actor that comes on the stage is a beau. The queens and heroines are so painted that they appear as ruddy and cherry-cheeked as milkmaids. The shepherds are all embroidered, and acquit themselves in a ball better than our English dancing-masters. I have seen a couple of rivers appear in red stockings; and *Alpheus*, instead of having his head covered with sedge and bulrushes, making love in a fair full-bottomed periwig and a plume of feathers; but with a voice so full of shakes and quavers, that I should have thought the murmurs of a country brook the much more agreeable music. I remember the last opera I saw in that merry nation was the rape of *Proserpine*, where *Pluto*, to make the more tempting figure, puts himself in a French equipage, and brings *Ascalaphus* along with him as his *valet de chambre*. This is what we call folly and impertinence; but what the French look upon as gay and polite."

The French musical drama continued in the state

which has now been described till nearly the middle of the last century. The stage was supplied with the productions of Lulli, and his imitators, Colasse, Campra, Destouches, and others; till a new era was created by the appearance of the operas of Rameau.

CHAPTER III.

The musical drama in England—Music in old English plays—Masques in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth—Plays performed by the singing-boys of the churches—Masques by the gentlemen of the Inns of Court—Ben Jonson's Masques for the court of James I.—Manners of that court—Alfonso Ferabosco—Nicolo Laniere.

The modern drama, in England, as in other countries, may be traced to the Mysteries, or spiritual representations, of the middle ages. The history of these pastimes of our forefathers, in which they combined devotion with amusement, is exceedingly curious and interesting, and has occupied the pens of many eminent writers: but the most comprehensive and entertaining account which has been given of them, is contained in Mr. Collier's valuable *History of the English Theatre.* Mr. Collier objects to the appellation *Mysteries,* as applied to these old English religious shows, on the ground that it was not given to them in their own times; and he, therefore, substitutes the term Miracle-plays. But we are not convinced of the necessity of disusing a name which they have long received,

in common with those of Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and by every writer who has had occasion to speak of them.

Music, which was always a part of those ancient exhibitions, continued to be introduced into the more regular dramas which succeeded them. Down to the seventeenth century, and including a considerable portion of it, there are few of our tragedies and comedies in which there is not vocal or instrumental music. In *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, the first English regular comedy, written in the year 1551, there is a song (the well-known Bacchanalian ditty, "I cannot eat but little meate,") and an instance of the use of music between the acts; for, at the end of the second act, one of the characters, leaving the stage, says to the musicians,

> "Into the town will I, my friendes to visit there,
> And hi ther straight again to see th' end of this gere.
> In the meantime, fellowes, pype up your fidles.
> I say, take them,
> And let your friendes hear such mirth as ye can make them."

In the tragedy of *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex*, written by Lord Buckhurst, in 1561, there are directions for exhibitions of dumb-show before each act; the first being accompanied by the music of violins, the second by the music of cornets, the third by the music of flutes, the fourth by the music of hautboys, and the last by drums and fifes.

In addition to the above, Dr. Burney mentions

the tragi-comedy of *King Cambyses*, in which music was performed at a banquet, and the tragedy of *Jocasta*, in which each act was concluded by a chorus, (though it is by no means clear that these choruses were sung,) as instances of the introduction of music in old English plays. But he has overlooked a much more remarkable instance, namely, the comedy of *Damon and Pythias*, by Richard Edwards. This may almost be called a musical drama, in the modern sense of the phrase. The author was not only a poet, but a musician; and, in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, was appointed one of the gentlemen, and master of the children, of the chapel royal. The play is really amusing, from its rudeness of construction, ludicrous absurdities, and the exceeding homeliness of the language in which all the characters express themselves. The scene, of course, lies at the court of Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, where Damon and Pythias, two Grecian gentlemen, make their appearance, with each a servant, Will, and Jack. There is Snap, a tipstaff; Gronno, the hangman; and a sort of clown, called Grimme. Carisophus, a parasite, accuses Damon to the tyrant; and, by way of completing the happy denouement, receives poetical justice by being kicked off the stage by the king's privy councillor. The famous debate before the tyrant, in which each of the friends contends that he ought to die for the other, is conducted after this fashion;

"*Pythias.* Let me have no wronge, as now standes the case,
Damon ought not to die, but Pythias:
By misadventure, not by his wyll, his houre is past; therefore I,
Beeause he eame not at his just time, ought justly to die:
So was my promise, so was thy promise, O kynge;
All this eourte ean bear witness of the thinge.

Damon. Not so, O mightie kynge, to justiee it is contrarie,
That for another man's fault the innoeent should die:
Ne yet is my time playnly expired, it is not fully noone
Of this my day appointed, by all the elockes in the towne.

Pythias. Believe no eloeke, the houre is past by the sonne."

Damon closes the debate, by addressing the hangman;—

"Come, Gronno, do thine office now; why is thy eolour so dead?
My neek is so short, thou wylt never have honestie in striking off this head."

Honestie here means honour, or credit. The author borrowed this speech from Hall's account of Sir Thomas More's execution. "Also the hangman kneeled down to him, asking him forgiveness of his death, (as the manner is,) to whom he said, I forgive thee, but I promise thee thou shalt never have honestie of the stryking off my head, my neck is so short."

This hangman is a merry fellow, and, like Scott's *Petit André*, very kind to his patients.

"*Dionisius.* Gronno, despoyle hym, and eke dispatch him quickly.

Gronno. It shall be done: since you eame into this place,
I might have stroken off seven heads in this space.

By'r lady, here are good garments; these are myne by the roode,
It is an evyll winde that bloweth no man good.
Now, Pythias, kneele down, ask me blessing like a pretty boy,
And, with a trice, thy head from thy shoulders I will convoy."

In this piece, * unlike any other plays of such antiquity, the actors are also singers. When Damon is carried to prison, his friend laments his fate in the following *scena*.

"*Pythias.* Ah! wofull Pythias! sithe now I am alone
What way shall I first begin to make my mone?
What words shall I finde apt for my complaynte?
Damon, my friend, my joy, my life is in peril, of force I must now faint.
But, oh musicke! as in joyful tunes thy merry notes I did borrow,
So now lend mee thy yernful tunes, to utter my sorrow.

Here Pythias sings, and the regalles † play

Awake, ye woful wightes,
That long have wept in woe:

* Among other pieces of pedantry, the characters are much given to quoting Latin: and, in one place, Jack addresses Grimme, in French, "*Je bois à vous, mon compagnon;*" to which Grimme replies, "*J'ai vous pleigé, petit Zawne.*" The annotator of the second edition of Dodsley's Old Plays, says, "I know not what is meant by *Zawne.*" The meaning is quite plain; Grimme calls Jack "*petit Jean.*"

† The regals was an instrument in common use in England, in the sixteenth century. It seems to have been a small organ, though its nature and powers are not distinctly known. Altieri, in his Italian and English dictionary, says, "*Regale*, sorta di stromento simile all' organo, ma minore."

Resign to me your plaintes and teares,
My haplesse hap to show.
My woe no tongue can tell,
Ne pen can well descrie:
O what a death is this to heare!
Damon my friend must die.

The loss of worldly wealth
Manne's wisdom may restore,
And physike hath provided, too,
A salve for every sore:
But my true friend once lost
No arte can well supplie;
Then, what a death is this to heare!
Damon my friend must die.

My mouthe refuse the foode
That should my limbes sustayne!
Let sorrow sinke into my brest,
And ransacke every veine:
You furies all at once
On me your torments trie:
Why should I live, since that I heare
Damon my friend must die!

Gripe me, ye greedy griefs,
And present plagues of death;
You sisters three, with cruel hands,
With speed come stop my breath:
Shrine me in clay alive,
Some good man stop mine eye;
O death, come now, seeing I heare
Damon my friend must die."

When Pythias, as Damon's hostage, is carried to prison, "the regalles play a mourning song." When, on Damon's failure to return at the appointed

time, his friend is about to suffer death, Eubulus, the benevolent councillor, enters and sings a song of lamentation for his fate, each stanza of which has a burden sung by "the Muses," in chorus; though we are not informed how the Muses came there. There is also a comic trio, sung by Jacke, Will, and Grimme; and the whole concludes with a regular *finale*, or song in honour of the queen, (before whom the play was performed by the children of her chapel,) ending thus;

"Long may she governe in honour and wealth,
Voyde of all sicknesse, in most perfect health;
Which health to prolonge, as true friends require,
God graunt she may have her own hearte's desire:
Which friends will defend with most stedfast faith,
The Lord graunt her such friends, most noble queene Elizabeth."

The author of this play was, no doubt, also the composer of the music. He died, according to Sir John Hawkins, on the 31st of October, 1566.

Shakspeare, who was evidently a passionate lover of music, has introduced it in a number of his plays. *The Tempest*, even in its original form, may almost be considered a musical drama. Besides "Come unto these yellow sands," "Full fathom five thy father lies," "Where the bee sucks," and other songs, it contains a Masque with music, presented by the spirits of the enchanted island. The same is the case with *As you like it*, in which there are the fine sylvan glees, "Under the green-wood tree," "What shall he have that kill'd the deer,"

and "It was a lover and his lass;" the exquisite song, "Blow, blow thou winter wind;" and the music in the last scene. Many of his other plays contain beautiful lyrical pieces; and the passages descriptive of the charms of music, and its effects, are innumerable. This admixture of music is to be found in the plays of Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Shirley, Dryden, and other dramatists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and did not cease till the musical drama acquired a separate and independent existence. The masques, which became the favourite amusements of the court in the sixteenth century, were the precursors of the opera in England; and (in the words of Burney) belong to the chain of dramas which completed the union of poetry and music on our stage. It was by a gradual progress that the masque ripened into the musical drama; and there are several steps between the pageants exhibited before Henry the Eighth and Queen Elizabeth, (and in which these sovereigns themselves were frequently actors,) and the *Comus* of Milton.

The masque held a principal place among the polite amusements of the reign of Henry VIII. It was composed chiefly of music, dancing, and a display of grotesque characters like a modern masquerade. One of these shows, in 1530, may be mentioned as a specimen. It was contrived by the king, to surprise Cardinal Wolsey, while he was giving a splendid banquet, at his palace of

Whitehall; and Shakspeare has introduced it into his play of Henry VIII. The account given of it by Hollingshed, the old chronicler, from whom Shakspeare borrowed his incidents, is, that at night, the king, in a mask, and attended by twelve other maskers in strange dresses, privately landed at Whitehall stairs. On their landing, several small pieces of cannon were fired. The cardinal, who was presiding at his banquet, in the midst of a splendid company, was (or affected to be—for there was probably some collusion in the case,) alarmed at this unusual noise, and desired Lord Sandys, who was one of the guests, to see what was the matter. Lord Sandys returned, and said that thirteen foreign noblemen of distinction were just arrived, having been attracted by the report of the cardinal's banquet, and of the beautiful ladies who graced it. The cardinal ordered them to be ushered into the banqueting room, to which they were conducted, attended by torch-bearers, and to the music of drums and fifes. After having received refreshments, they requested permission to dance with the ladies, whom they kissed, and to play with them at mum-chance, (a game at hazard,) producing at the same time a great golden cup, filled with crowns. Having played for some time with the ladies, they designedly lost all that remained in the cup to the cardinal, who began to hint his suspicions as to the real quality of one of his guests. On this, one of the maskers said, "If

your grace can point him out, he will readily discover himself." The cardinal pointed, by real or feigned mistake, to Sir Edward Nevil; at which the king laughed; and pulling off his own mask, and Sir Edward's, convinced the cardinal that he had guessed wrong. The king and his companions then retired to another apartment to change their attire; and in the mean time a fresh banquet of the most magnificent kind was served up, to which the king sat down with the rest of the company. The royal joke, of course, was the occasion of much mirth and jesting; and the night was spent in dancing, dice-playing, and other amusements. Shakspeare makes this entertainment the occasion on which Henry first saw and was smitten with the charms of the unfortunate Ann Boleyn. Another masque of the same period has something like the representation of an action. In the hall of the palace at Greenwich, a castle was reared, with two towers, gates, and battlements; and on the front was inscribed, *Le fortresse dangereux*. From the windows, looked out six ladies, clothed in russet satin, "laid all over with leaves of gold, and every one knit with laces of blew silk and gold, on their heads coifs and caps all of golde." Then the king entered the hall with five knights in embroidered garments. They assaulted the castle; and the six ladies, finding them to be champions of redoubtable valour, having demanded a parley, yielded up their fortress, and came down and

danced with the besiegers. The ladies then led the knights into the castle, which vanished, and the spectators retired.

The singing-boys of the monasteries and churches appear, from an early period, to have been employed in dramatic representations. These were at first on religious subjects, and performed on the great festivals of the church. So early as the year 1378, the scholars or choristers of St. Paul's cathedral, in London, petitioned Richard II. to prohibit certain ignorant and inexperienced persons from acting *The History of the Old Testament*, to the great prejudice of the clergy of the church, who had put themselves to considerable expense in preparing for a public representation of that play at the ensuing Christmas. In the year 1554, when the princess Elizabeth resided at Hatfield House, she was visited by Queen Mary. After mass, they were entertained with a grand exhibition of bear-baiting, "with which," says the chronicler, "their highnesses were right well content:" and, after supper, a play was presented by the children of Paul's. After the play, and the next morning, one of the boys sang to the princess, while she "plaid at the virginalls." Strype describes a magnificent entertainment given to Queen Elizabeth, in 1559, by the Earl of Arundel, at the antient palace of Nonsuch, in Surry. "There the queen had a great entertainment, with banquets, especially on Sunday night, made by the said earl; together

with a masque, and the warlike sounds of drums, and flutes, and all kind of musick, till midnight. On Monday was a great supper made for her; and at night was a play by the children of Paul's, and their musick-master, Sebastian. After that, a costly banquet, accompanied with drums and flutes. This entertainment lasted till three in the morning; and the earl presented her majesty a cupboard of plate." In the year 1562, when the society of parish-clerks in London celebrated one of their annual feasts, after morning service in Guildhall chapel, they retired to their hall, where, after dinner, "a goodly play" was performed by the choristers of Westminster Abbey, "with waits, and regals, and singing." The children of the chapel-royal were also famous actors, and were formed into a company of players, by Queen Elizabeth. All Lily's plays, and many of Shakspeare's and Jonson's, were originally performed by these juvenile actors, and it seems probable, that the title given by Jonson to one of his comedies, called *Cynthia's Revels*, was an allusion to this establishment of Queen Elizabeth, one of whose romantic names was Cynthia.*

The gentlemen of the Inns of Court, in those days, were much given to dramatic representations. John Roos, a student of Gray's Inn, and after-

* The musical comedy of "Damon and Pythias," which has been already described, was performed before the queen, by the children of her chapel.

wards a serjeant-at-law, wrote a comedy which was acted in the hall of the society, at Christmas, 1527. It gave such offence to Cardinal Wolsey, probably from its containing reflections on the pomp and arrogance of the clergy, that the author was degraded and imprisoned. In 1561, the tragedy of *Ferrex and Porrex* was performed before Queen Elizabeth, at Whitehall, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple. Decker, in his satire against Jonson, accuses him of having stolen jokes from the Christmas plays of the Templars. "You shall sweare not to bumbast out a new play with the old lyning of jestes stolne from the Temple-revells." In the year 1613, the Society of Lincoln's Inn presented a masque at Whitehall, before James I., in honour of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth with the Elector Palatine; and, on the same occasion, was performed "The Masque of Gray's Inn Gentlemen, and the Inner Temple," by Beaumont and Fletcher.

Some of these masques, presented by the members of these learned societies, were written by men of genius, and contain beautiful poetry. Among these may be mentioned, "The Inner Temple Masque," on the story of Circe and Ulysses, written by William Browne, a student of that society, about the year 1620.* In this piece there

* Browne's works were published in 1772; and some additional specimens of his poetry have been given to the world by

is the following fine song, which Circe sings as a charm to drive away sleep from Ulysses, who is discovered reposing under a tree.

" Son of Erebus and Night,
Hie away and aim thy flight,
Where consort none other fowl
Than the bat and sullen owl:
Where, upon the limber grass,
Poppy and mandragoras,
With like simples not a few,
Hang for ever drops of dew:
Where flows Lethe, without coil,
Softly like a stream of oil.
Hie thee thither, gentle Sleep!
With this Greek no longer keep.
Thrice I charge thee by my wand,
Thrice with moly from my hand,
Do I touch Ulysses' eyes,
And with th' iaspis. Then arise,
Sagest Greek!"

Warton remarks, that this song brings to mind some favourite touches in Milton's *Comus;* and is of opinion that a masque, thus recently exhibited on the story of Circe, and which there is every reason to think had acquired some popularity, probably suggested to Milton the idea of a masque on a similar subject. " It would be superfluous," Warton adds, " to point out minutely the absolute similarity of the two characters: they both deal in

Sir Egerton Brydges. He does not appear to have gained the reputation which he deserves.

incantations, conducted by the same mode of operation, and producing effects exactly parallel."

The masques, which formed the favourite amusement of the court during the reigns of James and Charles the First, were almost all composed by Ben Jonson, and are a delightful portion of his works. They have suffered much less from the injuries of time than his regular dramas, especially his comedies, which are founded, not so much on the permanent varieties of human character, as on the obsolete manners and peculiarities or *humours* of his own age, and are full, moreover, of allusions which all the labours of antiquarian research have not succeeded in rendering intelligible. Jonson's lyrical productions seem to belong to another and a later age. The style differs from that of the present day in little more than its richness of classical imagery ; a richness which has exposed the poet, though unjustly, to the charge of pedantry. His garb is magnificent, but not cumbrous ; its gorgeous ornaments are tasteful and well disposed ; and he wears it lightly and gracefully. Nothing can be more flowing and harmonious than the poetry of these pieces, both in the spoken dialogues and the songs ; and their lofty sentiments, and purity of thought, although written for the entertainment of a court, the manners of which were anything but pure, give an exalted idea of the character of their author.

These masques were professed imitations of the

newly-created Italian opera of that day. In some of them the dialogue is directed to be delivered "in *stilo recitativo*:" and the music, being the production of Italian composers, was of course in the Italian style. They resembled the Italian opera, too, in being founded on mythological subjects, and in being performed with great splendour of scenery and decoration. At this time all attempts to heighten the illusion of the stage by scenic display were confined to the expensive entertainments of the court. Queen Anne, the consort of James the First, took great delight in these performances, in which she herself, with her children, and the nobles and ladies of the court, took a part, figuring in the pageants and dancing in the ballets. Modern writers have characterised these court pastimes as pedantic and tasteless, pompous and operose. Surely, however, so permanent a relish for a kind of entertainment which employed the highest powers of one of our greatest poets, indicated considerable refinement of taste, if not of manners; and the opinion of Gifford* is at least as near the truth, notwithstanding the characteristic asperity with which it is expressed. "It must have been a very graceful and splendid entertainment: and, with due respect be it spoken, nearly as worthy of the nobility as the private masquerades, &c. which, with such advantage to good

* See note on the masque, "Pleasure reconciled to Virtue," in Gifford's edition of Jonson.

manners, have been substituted for it. It is with peculiar modesty that we, who cannot eke out an evening's entertainment without the introduction of gamblers, hired buffoons, and voluntary jack-puddings, declaim on the 'pedantry and wretched taste' of James and his court."

But whatever may be said in defence of the taste of a court which was addicted to this species of amusement, nothing can be said in favour of its manners. Sir John Harrington, in his *Nugæ Antiquæ*, gives an account of a scene which took place at the performance of one of these masques, during the visit of Christian IV. of Denmark to this country, so extraordinary as to be almost incredible, were it not for the character of the relater. "One day," he says, "a great feast was held, and after dinner, the representation of Solomon his Temple, and the coming of the Queen of Sheba, was made, (or, as I may better say,) was meant to have been made before their majesties, by device of the Earl of Salisbury and others. But, alas! as all earthly things do fail to poor mortals in enjoyment, so did prove our presentment hereof. The ladie, who did play the Queen's part, did carry most precious gifts to both their majesties; but, forgetting the steps arising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish majestie's lap, and fell at his feet, though I rather think it was in his face. Much was the hurry and confusion; clothes and napkins were at hand to make all clean. His

majesty then got up, and would dance with the queen of Sheba, but he fell down, and humbled himself before her, and was carried to an inner chamber, and laid upon a bed of state, which was not a little defiled with the presents of the Queen, which had been bestowed on his garments; such as wine, cream, jelly, beverage, cakes, spices, and other good matters. The entertainment and show *went forward*, and most of the presenters *went backward*, or fell down; wine did so occupy their upper chambers. Now did appear, in rich dresses, Hope, Faith, and Charity: Hope did essay to speak, but wine rendered her endeavours so feeble that she withdrew, and *hoped* the king would excuse her brevity: Faith was then left all alone, for I am certain she was not joined with good works, and left the court in a staggering condition. Charity came to the king's feet, and seemed to cover the multitude of sins her sisters had committed; in some sort she made obeisance, and brought gifts, but said she would return home again, as there was no gift which heaven had not already given his majesty. She then returned to Hope and Faith, who were both sick in the lower hall. Next came Victory, in bright armour, and presented a rich sword to the king, (who did not accept it, but put it by with his hand,) and by a strange medley of versification did endeavour to make suit to the king. But Victory did not triumph long; for, after much lamentable utterance,

she was led away like a silly captive, and laid to sleep on the outer steps of the ante-chamber. Now did Peace make entry, and strove to get foremost to the king; but I grieve to tell how great wrath she did discover unto those of her attendants, and, much contrary to her semblance, most rudely made war with her olive-branch, and laid on the pates of those who did oppose her coming. I have much marvelled at these strange pageantries; and they do bring to my remembrance what part of this sort in our queen's days, of which I was sometime a humble presenter and assistant, but I ne'er did see such lack of good order, discretion, and sobriety, as I have now done. I have passed much time in seeing the royal sports of hunting and hawking, where the manners were such as made me devise the beasts were pursuing the sober creation, and not man in quest of exercise and food. I will now, in good sooth, declare to you, who will not blab, that the gunpowder fright is got out of all our heads, and we are going on hereabout as if the devil was contriving every man should blow up himself by wild riot, excess, and devastation of time and temperance."

Jonson's masques, extending over a period of thirty years, are numerous. The first of them was performed in 1605, on the occasion of the marriage of Sir Philip Herbert and the Lady Susan Vere. It was called *The Masque of Blackness*, from the queen and a bevy of her ladies personating twelve

Ethiopian nymphs, daughters of the Niger, who came to England in search of a wash to whiten their complexions. It did not escape the lash of the wits of the time. Sir Dudley Carlton gives a ludicrous description of the exhibition. "At night we had the queen's mask in the banquetting-house, or rather her pageant. There was a great engine at the lower end of the room, which had motion, and in it were the images of sea horses with other terrible fishes, which were ridden by Moors. The indecorum was, that there was all fish and no water. At the further end was a great shell in the form of a scallop, wherein were four seats; on the lowest sat the queen with my lady Bedford; on the rest were placed the ladies Suffolk, Derby, Rich, Effingham, Ann Herbert, Susan Herbert, Elizabeth Howard, Walsingham, and Bevil. Their appearance was rich, but too light and courtezan-like for such great ones. Instead of vizards, their faces and arms up to the elbows were painted black, which was disguise sufficient, for they were hard to be known: but it became them nothing so well as their red and white; and you cannot imagine a more ugly sight than a troop of lean-cheeked Moors. The Spanish and Venetian ambassadors were both present, and sat by the king in state. The Spanish ambassador took out the queen, and forgot not to kiss her hand, though there was danger it might have left a mark on his lips." The conclusion of the revel is characteristic of the age. "The night's

work was concluded with a banquet in the great chamber, which was so furiously assaulted, that down went tables and tressels before one bit was touched."

One of the prettiest of these pieces, called *The Masque of Hymen*, was performed at the ill-starred nuptials of Robert Earl of Essex, and the lady Frances Howard, daughter of the Earl of Suffolk. This couple were mere children ; the bridegroom in his fourteenth, and the bride in her thirteenth year. Essex was sent abroad on his travels ; and his wife, in his absence, entered into a guilty intrigue with Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester, the celebrated favourite of James. After Essex's return, she found means to obtain a scandalous divorce, and immediately married her paramour, who was at the same time made Earl of Somerset. Sir Thomas Overbury, who had endeavoured to prevent this union, was poisoned in the tower by creatures of the Earl and Countess ; and though they, as well as their agents, were tried and condemned for this atrocious deed, yet the lives of the principal criminals, for some unaccountable reason, were spared by the king. They lived for many years shunned by every one, and adding to the wretchedness of their existence the bitterness of a mutual hatred, so intense and implacable, that, though dwelling in the same house, they were never seen to exchange a single word. Before her disgraceful second marriage, this lady appears to have been a frequent

performer in the court entertainments. This second marriage was favoured by James, still under the influence of his minion, and a splendid masque was performed in celebration of it; but this masque was *not* written by Jonson.

The Hue and Cry after Cupid was performed at the Lord Viscount Haddington's marriage at court, on the Shrove-Tuesday, at night, 1608. This Lord Haddington was the Sir John Ramsay who had saved the king's life, by stabbing the Earl of Gowrie, when he and his brother made their memorable assault on the king, at Perth, in the year 1600. This piece contains some fine lyrics. The following song, sung by the three Graces, may be taken as a specimen of Jonson's musical numbers.

" 1*st Grace.* Beauties, have you seen this toy,
Called Love, a little boy,
Almost naked, wanton, blind;
Cruel now, and then as kind?
If he be among ye, say;
He is Venus' runaway.

2*nd Grace.* She that will but now discover
Where the winged wag doth hover,
Shall to-night receive a kiss,
How, or where, herself would wish:
But, who brings him to his mother,
Shall have that kiss, and another.

3*rd Grace.* He hath marks about him plenty;
You shall know him among twenty.
All his body is a fire,
And his breath a flame entire,

That being shot, like lightning, in,
Wounds the heart, but not the skin.

4th Grace. At his sight, the sun hath turn'd,
Neptune in the waters burn'd;
Hell hath felt a greater heat;
Jove himself forsook his seat:
From the centre of the sky
Are his trophies rear'd on high.

2nd Grace. Wings he hath, which though ye clip,
He will leap from lip to lip,
Over liver, lights, and heart,
But not stay in any part;
And if chance his arrow misses,
He will shoot himself, in kisses.

3rd Grace. He doth bear a golden bow,
And a quiver, hanging low,
Full of arrows that outbrave
Dian's shafts; where, if he have
Any head more sharp than other,
With that first he strikes his mother.

1st Grace. Still the fairest are his fuel,
When his days are to be cruel,
Lovers' hearts are all his food,
And his baths their warmest blood.
Nought but wounds his hand doth season
And he hates none like to Reason.

2nd Grace. Trust him not; his words, though sweet,
Seldom with his heart do meet.
All his practice is deceit;
Every gift it is a bait;
Not a kiss but poison bears,
And most treason in his tears.

3rd Grace. Idle minutes are his reign;
Then, the struggler makes his gain,

By presenting maids with toys,
And would have ye think them joys;
'Tis the ambition of the elf,
To have all childish as himself.

1*st Grace.* If by these ye please to know him,
Beauties, be not nice, but show him.

2*nd Grace.* Though ye had a will to hide him;
Now, we hope, ye'll not abide him.

3*rd Grace.* Since you hear his falser play;
And that he's Venus' runaway."

Another of these masques, *The Masque of Queens*, was performed on the occasion of Prince Henry being created Prince of Wales, in 1610. It exhibited twelve ladies seated on thrones in the form of a pyramid, eleven of whom represented the like number of queens, of different times and countries, who had been illustrious for great qualities and virtues; and the twelfth was Queen Anne herself, who appeared in her own character, and under the poetical name of Bel-anna, seated at the summit of the pyramid, a place assigned her by the unanimous voice of her sister queens, as combining in herself all the qualities for which they severally had been distinguished. As a contrast to this picture of True Fame, there was an anti-masque of twelve women, appearing as witches, and representing Ignorance, Suspicion, Credulity, and other allegorical personages, the opposites to good Fame. This piece of *diablerie* so strongly excited the imagination of the young prince, that he desired Jonson, when the piece was published, to add notes

to it, explaining the sources from which all his spells, incantations, and magical ceremonies, had been derived: and these notes form a learned and curious treatise on witchcraft. The scenes of the witches have given rise to a good deal of controversy among the critics. By some it is contended that they were written in imitation, or rivalry, of Shakspeare: while, by others, this accusation is denied, and Jonson's originality strenuously defended. The general resemblance of these scenes to those in Macbeth is indeed very strong; though it may have arisen without plagiarism on either hand.

In this masque, as in Macbeth, there is a principal hag, to whom the others give an account of their doings in her absence. Here are some of them.

" 1*st Hag.* I have been all day looking after
A raven feeding upon a quarter;
And, soon as she turn'd her beak to the south,
I snatch'd the morsel out of her mouth.

3*d Hag.* I last night lay all alone
On the ground, to hear the mandrake groan,
And pluck'd him up, though he grew full low;
And, as I had done, the cock did crow.

4*th Hag.* And I have been choosing out this skull,
From charnel houses that were full;
From private grots, and public pits;
And frighted a sexton out of his wits.

7*th Hag.* A murderer, yonder, was hung in chains,
The sun and the wind had shrunk his veins;

I bit off a sinew ; I clipp'd his hair ;
I brought off his rags that danc'd in the air.

9*th Hag.* And I have been plucking, plants among,
Hemlock, henbane, adder's tongue,
Night-shade, moon-wort, libbard's bane ;
And twice, by the dogs, was like to be ta'en.

10*th Hag.* I, from the jaws of a gardener's bitch,
Did snatch these bones, and then leap'd the ditch :
Yet back I went to the house again,
Kill'd the black cat, and here's the brain.

11*th Hag.* I went to the toad breeds under the wall,
I charm'd him out, and he came at my call ;
I scratch'd out the eyes of the owl before ;
I tore the bat's wing : what would you have more ?

Dame (*the chief hag.*) Yes, I have brought, to help our vows,
Horned poppy, cypress boughs,
The fig-tree wild that grows on tombs,
And juice that from the larch-tree comes,
The basilisk's blood, and the viper's skin ;
And now our orgies let us begin."

The incantations conclude thus :

" About, about, and about,
Till the mist arise, and the lights fly out,
The images neither be seen nor felt ;
The woollen burn, and the waxen melt :
Sprinkle your liquors upon the ground,
And into the air ; around, around.
Around, around,
Around, around,
Till a music sound,
And the pace be found,
To which we may dance,
And our charms advance."

"At which," says the stage direction, "with a strange and sudden music, they fall into a magical dance, full of preposterous change and gesticulation. In the heat of their dance, on a sudden was heard the sound of loud music as if many instruments had made one blast; with which not only the hags themselves, but the hell into which they ran, quite vanished, and the whole face of the scene altered, scarce suffering the memory of such a thing: but in the place of it appeared a glorious and magnificent building, figuring the HOUSE OF FAME, in the top of which were discovered the twelve masquers, sitting upon a throne triumphal, erected in the form of a pyramid, and circled with all store of light." These masquers were the one real and eleven fictitious queens, already mentioned. One of them was the Countess of Essex, then the pride and boast of the English court, and shining in all the brightness of youth, loveliness, and at least apparent innocence. In this latter part of the piece, some fine songs and choruses are introduced. The author says that "the music is the work and honour of my excellent friend Alfonso Ferabosco," and he also commemorates the talents of "that most excellent tenor voice, and exact singer, her majesty's servant, Master Jo. Allen," by whom one of them was sung.

ALFONSO FERABOSCO, the composer of the music in the greater number of Jonson's masques, was English by birth, but Italian by parentage and edu-

cation. His father, of the same name, was an eminent madrigalist, and appears to have been a superior musician. Ferabosco the younger, however, was for a long time the most fashionable composer of his day, for the stage and the chamber. The encomiastic verses, by Ben Jonson and others, prefixed to a book of *Ayres*, published by him in 1609, show the opinion entertained of his merits—an opinion of which he himself largely partook; as appears from his dedication to Prince Henry, written in a quaint style of self satisfaction. "I could now," he says, "with solemn industry of many in *epistles*, enforce all that hath been said in praise of the *faculty* of musique, and make that commend the work: but I desire more, the work should commend the *faculty*: and therefore suffer these few *ayres* to owe their grace rather to your *Highnesse* judgment, than any other testimonies. I am not made of much speech; only I know them worthy of my name; and therein I took paines to make them worthy of yours." The modern ear, however, will take no pleasure in these *ayres*, or in any other specimens of this composer's music which are still extant. They are sufficiently regular in modulation and harmony; but the airs are stiff, laboured, and unmeaning; and the accent and rhythm of the poetry are quite disregarded. We cannot imagine Jonson's beautiful and flowing measures united with such dull and insipid sounds, and listened to with delight by a courtly and elegant

audience. But no better melody was then known in England; and the most refined taste will rarely transcend the highest standard of existing excellence.

Another of Jonson's musical coadjutors was Nicolo Laniere, also an Italian. He was a painter and engraver, as well as a musician; but his greatest excellence was in music. He etched a considerable number of plates for a drawing-book; was an able connoisseur in pictures; and possessed the picture-dealing art of giving modern pictures an air of antiquity, and passing off copies for originals. From the directions given in the printed copies, in Jonson's works, as to the manner of performing some of the masques which Laniere set to music, it is evident that, having newly arrived from Italy, he followed the Italian mode of the day; setting the dialogues *in stilo recitativo*, and intermingling them with airs for single voices, and choruses. Indeed, the masques of Ben Jonson, as set by Ferabosco and Laniere, bore a much closer resemblance to the regular Italian opera than the pieces called operas which prevailed on the English stage during the greater part of the last century.

Specimens of Laniere's music are to be found in Playford's collections. As might be expected, his recitatives are better than his airs; and are superior to those of any English composer of that day.

CHAPTER IV.

Time of Charles I. — Shirley's masque, *The Triumph of Peace*—Prynne's *Histrio-mastix*—Milton's *Comus*—Henry Lawes.

In the early part of the reign of Charles the First, masques remained in undiminished favour at court. They suited the gay disposition of his Queen, Henrietta Maria, and the love of dramatic amusements which she brought with her from the court of France. She was frequently a principal performer in the masques, which continued to be written chiefly by Ben Jonson. A great number of masques are mentioned as having been represented at court during the first years of Charles's reign, some of which were performed by the queen, and others by the gentlemen of the Inns of Court.

The most remarkable of the masques given by these gentlemen was one which was performed in 1633, before Charles and his court, as a testimony of loyalty to the king on his return from Scotland, after terminating for the time the discontents of that kingdom. It was written by Shirley, and

entitled *The Triumph of Peace.* The circumstances connected with its performance are minutely detailed by Lord Commissioner Whitelock, in a manuscript autobiography, written by him for the use of his children.* This masque had another object beside that of being an expression of love and duty to their majesties. "Some," says Whitelock, "held it the more seasonable, because this action would manifest the difference of their opinion from Mr. Prynne's new learning, and serve to confute his *Histrio-mastix* against interludes." Of this celebrated book, which had been published the preceding year, we shall presently give some account.

A committee of members of the four societies was appointed to manage the business; and Whitelock himself, being an amateur, was intrusted with the charge of the musical department. He made choice of Simon Ives, a musician of considerable merit, and the celebrated Henry Lawes, to compose the music of the masque, and to conduct its performance, under himself. "I also made choice," he says, "of four of the most excellent of the queen's chapel, M. La Ware, M. Duval, M. Robert, and M. Mari, with divers others of foreign nations, who were most eminent in their art, not in the least neglecting my own countrymen whose knowledge of music rendered them useful in this

* This account, here abridged, is quoted at full length by Burney, vol. iii. p. 369.

action, to bear their parts in the musicke, which I resolved, if I could, to have so performed, as might excell any that ever before this time had been in England. Herein I kept my purpose, causing the meetings of all the musitians to be frequent at my house in Salisbury Court; and there I have had together att one time, of English, French, Italian, German, and other masters of musicke, fourty lutes, besides other instruments, and voyces of the most excellent kind in consort."

The masque was performed on Candlemas night, the persons engaged in it having proceeded, in procession, from Ely-house in Holborn, to Whitehall. This procession is minutely described, and must have been a magnificent affair. The actors in the masque were sixteen in number, four gentlemen of each Inn, who were drawn in four chariots and six. There were "one hundred gentlemen of the Innes of Court in very rich cloathes, five and twenty chosen out of each house, of the most proper and handsome young gentlemen of the societies. Every one of them was gallantly mounted, on the best horses, and with the best furniture that the king's stable and the stables of all the nobility in towne could afforde, and they were forward on this occasion to lend them. The richness of the apparel and furniture, glittering by the light of the multitude of torches attending them, with the motion and stirring of the mettled horses, and the many and various gay liveries of their servants,

butt especially the personal beauty and gallantry of the handsome young gentlemen, made the most glorious and splendid show that ever was beheld in England."

This gallant array was followed by a series of anti-masques, or burlesque processions of beggars mounted on the most sorry jades that could be procured, men on horseback imitating the notes of birds, and disguised in the shapes of animals, with other devices of a ludicrous and satirical kind. In one of them "rode a fellow upon a little horse with a great bit in his mouth and upon the man's head was a bit with headstall and reins, fastened, and signified a projector, that none in the kingdome might ride their horses but with such bits as they should buy of him. Another projector, who begged a patent of monopoly to feed capons with carrots; and several other projectors, were in like manner personated, which pleased the spectators the more, because by it an information was covertly given to the king of the unfitness and ridiculousness of these projects, against the law; and the attorney Noy, who had most knowledge of them, had a great hand in this anti-masque of the projectors."

When the procession arrived at Whitehall, through streets crowded with spectators, "the king and queen stood at a window, looking straight forward into the street, to see the masque come by, and being delighted with the noble bravery of it,

they sent to the marshall to desire that the whole show might feteh a turne about the Tilt-yard, that their majesties might have a double view of them; which was done aceordingly, and then they alighted at Whitehall-gate, and were eonducted to severall roomes and plaees prepared for them.

"The king and queen and all their noble train being come in, the masque began, and was incomparably performed, in the dancing, speeehes, musicke, and seenes; the danees, figures, properties, the voiees, instruments, songs, aiers, composures, the words and aetions, were all of them exact, none fayled in their parts, and the seenes were most curious and costly. The queen did the honour to some of the masquers to dance with them herselfe, and to judge them as good dancers as ever she saw, and the great ladyes were very free and civill in dancing with all the masquers as they were taken out by them. Thus, they continued in their sports until it was almost morning, and then, the king and queen retiring, the masquers and Innes of Court gentlemen were brought to a stately banquett, and after that was dispersed, every one departed to his own quarters."

The queen was so delighted with this show, that it was repeated at Merehant Tailors' hall, where a banquet was given to their majesties by the lord mayor. "This," says Whiteloek, "gave great contentment to their majestyes, and no less to the citizens, especially those of the younger sort, and of

the female sexe, and it was to the great honour and no less charge of the lord mayor and freemen."

"After these dreames past," he continues, "and these pompes vanished, all men were satisfied by the committee justly and bountifully. For the musicke, which was particularly committed to my charge, I gave to Mr. Ives and to Mr. Lawes 100*l.* apiece for their rewards; for the four French gentlemen, the queen's servants, I thought that a handsome and liberall gratifying of them would be made known to the queen, their mistress, and well taken by her. I therefore invited them one morning to a collation att St. Dunstan's taverne, in the great room, the oracle of Apollo, where each of them had his plate layd for him, covered, and the napkin by it; and when they opened their plates they found in each of them forty pieces of gold, of their master's coyne, for the first dish, and they had cause to be much pleased with this surprisall. The rest of the musitians had rewards answerable to their parts and qualities; and the whole charge of the musicke came to about one thousand pounds. The clothes of the horsemen reckoned one with another at 100*l.* a suit, att the least, amounted to 10,000*l.* The charges of all the rest of the masque, which were borne by the societies, were accounted to be above twenty thousand pounds."*

* In Whitelock's account there is a trait of simple vanity too characteristic to be omitted. "I was conversant with the musitians, and so willing to gain their favour, especially at this time,

The book by William Prynne, which is alluded to by Whitelock, and the effects of which were attempted to be counteracted by the exhibition of the above masque, had been published in the preceding year, 1632. It is entitled "Histrio-mastix, the Player's Scourge, or Actor's Tragedie, in which it is pretended to be evidenced, that stage-playes (the very pompes of the divell, which we renounced in baptisme, if we believe the fathers) are sinfull, heathenish, lewde, ungodly spectacles, and most pernicious corruptions; condemned in all ages as intolerable mischiefs to churches, to republickes, to the manners, minds, and soules of men. And that the profession of play-poets, of stage-players, together with the penning, acting, and frequenting of

that I composed an aire myself, *with the assistance of Mr. Ives*, and called it *Whitelock's Coranto;* which being cried up, was first played publiquely, by the Blackfryar's musicke, who were then esteemed the best of common musitians in London. Whenever I came to that house (as I sometimes did in those days, though not often) to see a play, the musitians would presently play *Whitelock's Coranto*, and it was so often called for that they would have it played twice or three times in an afternoon. The queen hearing it, would not be persuaded that it was made by an Englishman, because she said it was fuller of life and spirit than the English airs use to be; butt she honored the *Coranto* and the maker of it with her majestye's royall commendation. It grew to that request, that all the common musitians in this towne, and all over the kingdome, gott the composition of it, and played it publiquely in all places, for above thirtie years after." *Whitelock's Coranto* has been preserved from oblivion by being inserted in the histories of both Hawkins and Burney.

stage-plays, are unlawful, infamous, and misbecoming Christians. All pretences to the contrarie are here likewise fully answered, and the unlawfulness of acting or beholding academicall interludes briefly discussed, besides sundry other particulars concerning dancing, dicing, health-drinking, &c." This ample title gives a very good summary of the contents of the book, which is directed not only against plays performed in public theatres, but also against "academicall interludes" or the masques and other entertainments, then so much in fashion, presented by the students of the Inns of Court.

Prynne is a bitter enemy of music, and inveighs against its use, not only in connexion with dramatic entertainments, but in all circumstances whatever, excepting in psalm-singing. He affirms that one unlawful concomitant of stage-plays is amorous, obscene, lascivious, lust-provoking songs and poems; which, he says, were once so odious in our church, that in the articles to be inquired of in visitations, set forth in the first year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, churchwardens were enjoined to inquire "whether any minstrels or any other persons did use to sing or say any songs or ditties that be vile and unclean." He maintains, on the authority of Clemens Alexandrinus, "that cymbals and dulcimers are instruments of fraud; that pipes and flutes are to be abandoned from a sober feast; and that chromatical harmonies are to be left to impudent malapertness in wine, to whorish

musick crowned with flowers." And upon these solid and rational grounds he inveighs with the utmost violence against all pastimes in which music has any share.

This book, however absurd and ridiculous its contents may now appear, was, at the time of its publication, looked upon in a very different light. It spoke the sentiments of the Puritans, a great and increasing body, who held in abomination all those amusements against which it was levelled. By them, therefore, it was received with great approbation, while it excited the indignation and alarm of the court-party, who held it to be a satire against their majesties themselves, as being fond of these pastimes. The queen was supposed to be especially aimed at, because she frequently acted a part in the masques which were performed at court; and the phrase in the table of contents, "Women actors notorious whores," was considered an innuendo against her majesty. Prynne, therefore, who was a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, was indicted in the court of Star-chamber, that memorable instrument of arbitrary power, for a libel.

The enormity of Prynne's offence, in the eyes of the court, was heightened by the manner in which he had attacked the hierarchy, and the ceremonies and innovations in religious worship lately introduced by Laud. "The music of the churches," he had said in his characteristic style, "is not the noise of men, but a bleating of brute beasts; cho-

risters bellow the tenor as if it were oxen; bark a counterpart as if it were a kennel of dogs; roar out a treble as if it were a sort of bulls; and grunt out a bass as it were a number of hogs." He said that Christmas, as it was kept, was the devil's Christmas; and endeavoured to persuade men to affect the name of Puritan, as if our Saviour himself had been of that persuasion.

These accumulated provocations may account for, though they cannot justify, the spirit of hatred and revenge by which the judges were actuated, and the excessive severity, or rather barbarity, of the punishment inflicted on the unfortunate culprit. "It is a strange thing," said the Lord Chief Justice, "what this man taketh upon him; he is not like those powder-traitors, they would have blown us all up at once; this throweth all down at once to hell together, and delivereth them over to Satan. I beseech your lordships to give me leave. 'Stage-plays,' &c. saith he, 'none are gainers and honoured by them but the devil and hell; and when they have taken their wills in lust there, their souls go to eternal torment hereafter;' and this must be the end of this monster's horrible sentence. He saith, 'So many as are in playhouses are so many unclean spirits;' and that 'play-haunters are little better than incarnate devils.' He doth not only condemn all play-writers, but all protectors of them and all beholding of them: and dancing at plays and singing at plays they are all damned, and that

no less than to hell. I beseech your lordships to give me leave, but in a word, to read to you what he writes of dancing, &c. ‘ It is the devil's profession ; and he that entereth into a dance entereth into a devilish profession ; and so many paces in a dance, so many paces to hell.’ This is what he conceiveth of dancing. ‘ The woman that singeth in the dance is the prioress of the devil, and those that answer are clerks, and the beholders are the parishioners, and the music are bells, and the fiddlers are the minstrels of the devil.’ I said it was a seditious libel ; this point of sedition is the only thing that troubles me, and it is that which I shall offer to your lordships ; for I do know it, the good opinion, heart, will, and affections of the king's people and subjects are the king's greatest treasure.” The Earl of Dorset said, “ Mr. Prynne, I do declare you to be a schism-maker in the church, a sedition-monger in the commonwealth, a wolf in sheep's clothing ; in a word, ‘ omnium malorum nequissimus.’ I shall fine him 10,000*l.*, which is more than he is worth, yet less than he deserveth ; I will not set him at liberty no more than a plagued man or a mad dog, who, though he cannot bite, he will foam ; he is so far from being a sociable soul that he is not a rational soul ; he is fit to live in dens with such beasts of prey as wolves and tigers like himself. Therefore I do condemn him to perpetual imprisonment as those monsters that are no longer to live among men, nor to see light. Now

for corporal punishment, my lords ; whether should I burn him in the forehead or slit him in the nose? He that was guilty of murder was marked in a place where he might be seen, as Cain was. I should be loth he should escape with his ears, for he may get a periwig, which he now so much inveighs against, and so hide them, or force his conscience to make use of his unlovely love-locks on both sides. Therefore I would have him branded in the forehead, slit in the nose, and his ears cropt too. My Lords, I now come to this ordure ; I can give no better term to it, to burn it, as it is common in other countries, or otherwise we shall bury Mr. Prynne and suffer his ghost to walk. I shall therefore concur in the burning of the book ; but let there be a proclamation made, that whoever shall keep any of the books in his hands and not bring them to some public magistrate to be burnt in the fire, let them fall under the sentence of this court." These brutal suggestions were not entirely adopted : but Prynne was sentenced to be put on the pillory in two places, Westminster and Cheapside; to lose both his ears, one in each place ; to pay 5,000*l.* fine to the king ; and to be imprisoned during life : and this sentence was executed.

Milton's Masque of *Comus*, one of the brightest gems of English poetry, was written for the Earl of Bridgewater, at whose mansion it was first performed in 1634. The story of the piece was founded on an incident which had occurred to the earl's

children. When he resided at Ludlow Castle, in Shropshire, his two sons, Lord Brackley and Mr. Egerton, and his daughter Lady Alice Egerton, were benighted in passing through a neighbouring forest, and the young lady for some time could not be found. This adventure excited Milton's imagination, and gave rise to the masque, which was represented on Michaelmas-eve for the amusement of the family and the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood. The two brothers were performed by the Earl's sons, and his daughter was the *Lady*. Lady Alice Egerton, who was then a girl of thirteen, afterwards became lady Vaughan and Carbury, and was distinguished for her talents and accomplishments.

Henry Lawes, the celebrated composer of the music in this masque, taught music in the family of Lord Bridgewater, and Lady Alice Egerton was his pupil. His first book of "Ayres and Dialogues," published in 1653, is dedicated to her, and Lady Herbert of Cherbury, her sister. Lawes himself acted the part of the attendant spirit. In 1637 Lawes published the *poem* of *Comus;* but the music does not appear to have ever been printed. It appears, however, from a manuscript in Lawes' own handwriting, mentioned by Hawkins and Burney, that the two songs, "Sweet Echo" and "Sabrina fair," together with three other passages in the poem—"Back, shepherds, back," "To the ocean now I fly," and "Now my task is smoothly done,"

were probably the whole of the original music; and that the rest of the poetry was simply declaimed.

If we were to judge of the genius of Henry Lawes from the specimen given of it by Hawkins and Burney, the song, "Sweet Echo," in this masque, our opinion certainly would be very unfavourable. The lyrical beauty of the words does not seem to have inspired the composer. His music has neither the accent and emphasis of *recitative*, nor the rhythmical flow of *air*. It is a sort of stiff and constrained chant, destitute of melody, and, except in the passage—

> "Where the love-lorn nightingale
> Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well,"

where there is a glimmering of feeling at the words "sad song,"—it is equally destitute of expression.

Though we agree with Burney in his strictures on this composition, yet we think he has led the world to entertain an erroneous opinion of Lawes' character as a musician. "I have examined," he says, "with care and candour all the works I can find of this composer, which are still very numerous, and am obliged to own myself unable, by their excellence, to account for the great reputation he acquired, and the numerous panegyrics bestowed on him by the greatest poets and musicians of his time." "But *bad* as the music of Lawes appears to us," he says in another place, "it seems to have been sincerely admired by his contemporaries in

general." And he adds, that "most of the productions of this celebrated musician are languid and insipid, and equally devoid of learning and genius."

If such was Lawes' musical character, the fact, that no musician ever enjoyed, in a greater degree, the admiration of his contemporaries, is singular and unaccountable. Burney says, "his temper and conversation must certainly have endeared him to his acquaintance, and rendered them partial to his productions." This is true—Lawes was both esteemed and beloved; but this was not sufficient to render his music the admiration of the most accomplished, refined, and distinguished people of his time; and, in particular, to draw the most enthusiastic eulogies from Milton, whose exquisite taste had been cultivated by a residence among the poets and musicians of Italy. In *Comus* there are several beautiful allusions to Lawes. The attendant spirit, a character represented by Lawes himself, says,

> "———— But I must put off
> These my sky robes, spun out of Iris' woof,
> And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
> That to the service of this house belongs,
> Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
> Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
> And hush the waving woods."

He is thus alluded to by the *Elder Brother*—

" Thyrsis, whose artful strains have oft delay'd
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweeten'd every musk-rose of the dale."

And also in this passage—

" He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing,
Which, when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit and hearken e'en to extasy."

Such warmth of expression must surely have been inspired by strains different from such as are described by Burney.

Lawes has also been praised by Waller. The first book of his *Ayres and Dialogues* contains encomiastic verses by that poet, by Edward and John Phillips, the nephews of Milton, and others. Fenton, the editor of Waller's works, says, that " the best poets of Lawes' time were ambitious of having their verses set to music by this admirable artist." Indeed, he not only composed music for the verses of almost every eminent poet of his time, but of many young noblemen and gentlemen, who appear to have become song-writers from the pleasure of having him to clothe their verses in a musical garb. In his different collections there are songs written by Thomas Earl of Winchelsea, William Earl of Pembroke, John Earl of Bristol, Lord Broghill, Thomas Carey, son of the Earl of Monmouth, Henry Noel, son of Lord Camden, Sir Charles Lucas, and Carew Raleigh, son of Sir Walter Raleigh. Many of the songs of these amateur poets possess great merit: and Lawes' three

books of *Ayres and Dialogues* contain a body of elegant and spirited lyric poetry which deserves to be better known.

This, too, in some degree, is the case with the music contained in these, and other collections, in which Lawes' compositions are to be found. Burney says he has examined these collections with care and candour. If so, his sweeping condemnation of the author is surprising; for we will venture to say that few musicians will examine them carefully without finding the task a very agreeable one. The trifling specimens he has given (vol. iii. p. 397) are by no means fair ones; and the songs of which he has mentioned the titles, are far from being the best he could have pointed out. We have not only found many airs which appear to be at least equal to any that had as yet been produced by English composers, but some, which are in themselves so graceful and flowing, and so happily united to elegant poetry, that they would require only the addition of a modern accompaniment, and the assistance of modern singing, to gratify the public, even at the present day. Among these we may mention "Careless of love and free from fears," and "Why shouldst thou swear I am forsworn?" both which are as smooth and melodious as if they had been composed yesterday. "Gaze not on swans in whose soft breast," would be a very pleasing song, but for a defect in the rhythm of the air; which, however,

arises from an evident oversight, and is easily corrected. "Dearest, do not delay me," and "Lovely Chloris, though thine eyes," are exceedingly pretty: the latter is very like Arne's "Water parted from the sea."—"Little love serves my turn," in six-four time, is in a gay, dancing measure, and quite modern in its effect. "Chloris, yourself you so excel," a song by Waller, is a fine specimen of the *concetti* so fashionable in the amorous poetry of that age. It is addressed to a lady, on her singing some of the author's verses.

"Chloris, yourself you so excel,
When you vouchsafe to breathe my thought,
That, like a spirit, with this spell
Of mine own teaching I am caught.

The eagle's fate and mine is one,
That, on the shaft that made him die,
Espy'd a feather of his own,
Wherewith he wont to soar so high.

Had Echo with so sweet a grace
Narcissus' loud complaints return'd,
Not for reflection of his face,
But of his voice, the boy had mourn'd.'

We do not find, it is true, in the works of Lawes, the lofty conceptions of Purcell, nor those "tender strokes of art" by which that unrivalled musician reached the inmost recesses of the soul. But Lawes was gifted with imagination, taste, and feeling; and deserves a much higher place among

English composers than that which Burney and other critics have thought proper to assign him.

Of Lawes' personal history not much is known. He was admitted a gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1625; and afterwards was appointed one of the public and private musicians of Charles I., with whom he was in great favour. Besides *Comus*, his principal dramatic production, he composed the music to several of the masques performed at court. On the fall of the monarchy, and the consequent abolition of the king's musical establishments, Lawes was deprived of his situations, and supported himself by teaching ladies to sing; and his subsistence derived from this source was probably scanty enough. In those days the fine arts were not, as now, supported by the patronage of the public. Wealth was little diffused, and taste and refinement still less. During the tranquil part of the reign of Charles I., it would appear that musicians must have subsisted chiefly by means of the royal household and chapel establishments, the munificence of the sovereign, and the patronage and employment of the great. There was no occupation for musicians in the families of the middle classes; nor were there concerts, or any public amusement, except the theatres, which employed but few hands, and those of an inferior order, the musical drama not yet having been introduced into public theatres. When the monarchy was overthrown, the abolition of every musical esta-

blishment, the prohibition of every entertainment of which music formed a part, and the prevalence of those opinions which discourage the use of music, even as a private amusement, must have reduced Lawes and his tuneful brethren to depend on the very limited patronage which the higher classes were still enabled to afford them. Lawes, accordingly, in the preface to the first book of his *Ayres*, published in 1653, says, "Now we live in so sullen an age, that our profession itself hath lost its encouragement."

In 1655, Lawes published his second book, and, in 1658, his third book of *Ayres and Dialogues*. There are some passages in his prefaces to these collections, which show, that the complaints made by English musicians, of the preference given to foreign music, merely because it is foreign, are of long standing. "Wise men have observed," he says, in the preface to his first book, "our generation so giddy, that whatsoever is native (be it ever so excellent) must lose its taste, because themselves have lost theirs. For my part, I profess (and such as know me can bear me witness) I desire to render every man his due, whether strangers or natives. I acknowledge the Italians the greatest masters of music, but yet not all. And (without depressing the honour of other countries,) I may say our own nation hath had, and yet hath, as able musicians as any in Europe; and many now

living (whose names I forbear) are excellent both for the voice and instruments. I never loved to set or sing words I do not understand. But this present generation is so sated with what is native, that nothing takes their care but what is sung in a language which (commonly) they understand as little as they do the music. And to make them a little sensible of the ridiculous humour, I took a table or index of old Italian songs, (for one, two, and three voices,) and this index (which read together made a strange medley of nonsense) I set to a varied air and gave out that it came from Italy, whereby it hath passed for a rare Italian song."—This ingenious hoax on his contemporaries is inserted as the last song in the book.—In the preface to the second book, he says, "There are knowing persons, who have been long bred in those worthily admired parts of Europe, who ascribe more to us than we to ourselves; and able musicians returning from travel do wonder to see us so thirsty after foreigners. For they can tell us (if we knew it not) that music is the same in England as in Italy; the concords and discords, the passions, spirits, majesty, and humours, are all the same they are in England; their manner of composing is sufficiently known to us, their best compositions being brought over hither by those who are able enough to choose. But we must not here expect to find music at the highest, when all arts and sciences are at so low an ebb. As for my-

self, although I have lost my fortunes with my master (of blessed memory) I am not so low to bow for a subsistence to the follies of this age, and to humour such as will seem to understand our art better than we that have spent our lives in it."

At the Restoration Lawes recovered his place in the Chapel Royal, and composed the coronation anthem for Charles II. He died in 1662, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

CHAPTER V.

The Commonwealth—Sir William Davenant's entertainments—His musical pieces—First female performances—Theatre established after the Restoration—Matthew Lock—*Psyche*—*Macbeth*—Duchess of Mazarin.

In the year 1647 rigorous ordinances were issued by the parliament against stage-plays, and all entertainments consisting of music and dancing, by which not only the actors in such entertainments, but all such as should be present at them, were subjected to severe punishment by fine and imprisonment. There was thus a complete cessation of dramatic performances for about ten years.

In 1656, Sir William Davenant obtained permission to open a kind of theatre at Rutland-house, in Charterhouse-square, for the exhibition of what he called "an Entertainment in Declamation and Music, after the manner of the ancients." Anthony Wood, imagining that this permission was to perform Italian operas, says: "Though Oliver Cromwell had now prohibited all other theatrical represen-

tations, he allowed of this, because, being in an unknown language, it could not corrupt the morals of the people." Sir William Davenant's *Entertainment* was wholly in the English language, nor was it an opera, though he calls it so. He seems to have intended it as the means of overcoming the existing prejudices against dramatic representations, and of predisposing the public to receive favourably a series of exhibitions of this kind, which he had it in contemplation to give; and it appears to have answered his purpose, for it was immediately followed by a succession of dramatic performances, which Davenant continued till his death.

This "Entertainment after the manner of the ancients" is worthy of notice, as giving us some curious views of the opinions and manners of that age.

"After a flourish of music," say the stage directions, "the Prologue enters," and addresses the audience in verse, designating the forthcoming entertainment as an opera. We are then told that "a consort of instrumental musick, adapted to the sullen disposition of Diogenes, being heard awhile, the curtains are suddenly opened, and, in two gilded rostras, appear Diogenes the cynick and Aristophanes the poet, who declaim against and for publique entertainments by moral representations." The arguments used by these orators show us what were the notions entertained at that period, in regard to dramatic entertainments. The following

are such parts of them as relate to the musical drama.

Diogenes thus argues against the opera :—

"Would you meet to enjoy the pleasure of musick? 'Tis a deceitful art, whose operations lead to the evil of extreams, making the melancholy to become mad, and the merry to grow fantastical. Our city's ancient stamp, the owl (which bears no part in the merry quires of the woods) denotes the wisdom, not the mirth of Athens. I would have the people of Athens, from the mason to the merchant, look as grave and thoughtful as rich mourners. They should all seem priests in the temples, philosophers in their houses, and statesmen in the streets. Then we should not need to be at the expense of public magistrates; but every man would be freely forward to rule another, and in time grow to such a height and ability in government, as we should by degrees banish the whole city; and that ostracism were happy preferment; for the rest of the world would soon invite us to rule them.

"Does not the extasie of music transport us beyond the regions of reason? changing the sober designs of discretion into the very wildness of dreams, urging sober minds to aim at the impossible successes of Love; and enkindling in the active the destructive ambitions of war? Does it not turn the heads of the young till they grow so giddy as if they walked on pinnacles; and often divert the fect of the aged from a funeral to a wedding? And con-

sider (my malicious friends of Athens) how you would look if you should see me, at the meer provocation of a fiddle, lead out a matron to dance at the marriage of an old philosopher's widow?

"Would you be delighted with scenes? which is, to be entertained with the deception of motion and transposition of lights; where, whilst you think you see a great battel, you are sure to get nothing by the victory. You gaze at imaginary woods and meadows, where you can neither fell nor mowe. On seas where you have no ships, and on rivers where you catch no fish. But you may find it more profitable to retire to your houses, and there study how to gain by deceiving others, than to meet in theatres, where you must pay for suffering yourselves to be deceived. This, Athenians, concerns your profit; which is a word you understand better than all the grammarians in Greece. And though the ways towards profit are somewhat dark, yet you need no light from me, which made me presume to leave my lanthern at home."

Aristophanes, in his reply, thus answers the above parts of his adversary's discourse.

"He proceeds next against the ornaments of a public opera, musick and scenes. But how can he avoid the traducing of music, who hath always a discord within himself, and which seems so loud, too, as if it would, a mile off, untune the harmonious soul of Plato. Musick doth not heighten

melancholy into madness, but rather unites and recollects a broken and scattered minde; giving it sudden strength to resist the evils it hath long and strongly bred. Neither doth it make the merry seem fantastical, but only to such as are enviously sad at the pleasure of others. If it doth warm the ambitious when they are young, 'tis but as cordials warm the blood, to make it evaporate the evil humour. If it awake hope in the aged, (where hope is fallen asleep and would take rest,) we may therefore say, (since hope is the vital heat of the minde,) that it prolongs life when it would slothfully expire. Nor need Diogenes suspect that it may make his bones ake by seducing him to a dance; for he can only lift up his feet to a dismal discord, or dance to a consort of groaners or gnashers of teeth.

"He is offended at scenes in the opera, as at the useless visions of imagination. Is it not the safest and shortest way to understanding, when you are brought to see vast seas and provinces, fleets, armies, and forts, without the hazards of a voyage, or pains of a long march? Nor is that deception where we are prepared and consent to be deceived. Nor is there much loss in that deception where we gain some variety of experience by a short journey of the sight. When he gives you advice not to lay out time in prospect of woods and meadows which you can never possess, he may as well shut up his

own little window (which is the bunghole of his tub) and still remain in the dark, because the light can only show him that which he can neither purchase nor beg."

Having thus turned into ridicule the ascetic doctrines of the Puritans on this subject, the author winds up this part of the entertainment with a song, concluding thus :—

"Can age e'er do them harm
Who cheerfully grow old?
Mirth keeps their hearts still warm;
Fools think themselves safe in sorrow and cold.
[*Chorus.*] Then let the sour cynic live coopt;
Let him quake in his threadbare cloak,
Till he find his old tub unhoopt,
His staff and his lanthern broke."

"The song being ended," continues the stage-directions, "a consort of instrumental musick, after the French composition, being heard awhile, the curtains are suddenly opened, and in the *rostras* appear sitting a Parisian and a Londoner, in the livery robes of both cities, who declaim concerning the pre-eminence of London and Paris."

These declamations being ended, the curtains were suddenly closed, and the company entertained by vocal and instrumental music, with a satirical song against the French, giving the palm to our own metropolis. Then there is an epilogue: and "after a flourish of loud music," the curtain is closed, and the entertainments ended.

At the end of the piece, there is a note, stating, that

"the vocal and instrumental music was composed by Doctor Charles Coleman, Captain Henry Cook; Mr. Henry Lawes, and Mr. George Hudson." These were among the most eminent musicians of the time. Henry Cook was educated in the chapel royal, during the reign of Charles the First; but at the commencement of the civil war he entered the army, in which he obtained a captain's commission. After the restoration, the loyalty and ability of this musical soldier recommended him to the notice of Charles the Second, by whom he was appointed master of the children of the chapel-royal. The specimens of his music which remain, are of little merit. He was the musical instructor of Humphrey, Blow, and Wise; and is said by Anthony Wood to have died of grief, in the year 1672, in consequence of his talents and reputation having been eclipsed by those of his pupil, Humphrey. Coleman and Hudson were gentlemen of the private music of Charles the First. No farther particulars of their lives are recorded.

Davenant's "Entertainment after the manner of the Ancients," was immediately succeeded by *The Siege of Rhodes*, which was performed at Rutland House, in 1656. Pope says, that "this was the first opera sung in England;" and Langbaine, in his *Account of the English Dramatic Poets*, says that *The Siege of Rhodes*, and some other plays of Sir William Davenant, in the times of the civil wars, were acted *in stilo recitativo*. Burney dis-

putes this; "I can find no proof," he says, "that it was sung in recitative, either in the dedication to Lord Clarendon, in the folio edition of 1673, or the body of the drama." But we find conclusive evidence on this point. Cibber says, that "Sir W. Davenant opened a theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, in 1662, where he produced *The Siege of Rhodes*, with unprecedented splendour." A second part was then added to it, which we find in Davenant's works. Evelyn, in his *Diary*, says; "1662, Jan. 9. I saw acted 'the Second Part of the Siege of Rhodes.'" "In this," he continues, "acted the fair and famous comedian, called Roxelana, from the part she performed; and I think it was the last, she being taken to be the Earl of Oxford's *Misse* (as at this time they began to call lewd women).* *It was in recitative musiq.*"

Davenant's next piece was *The cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru*, which was produced in 1658. The scenes and decorations of this drama, (according to Downes, in his *Roscius Anglicanus*,) were the first that were introduced on a public stage in England. Evelyn thus speaks of this piece;

* This actress was Mrs. Davenport. Lord Oxford, not having succeeded in his attempts to seduce her, had recourse to the stratagem of a sham marriage, by a pretended clergyman. When she discovered this infamous deception, she threw herself at the king's feet, to demand justice. Charles was not the sovereign from whom justice was to be obtained in a case like this; but Lord Oxford allowed her an annuity of £300.

"5 May, 1659. I went to visit my brother in London, and next day to see a new *Opera after the Italian way, in recitative musiq, and sceanes,* much inferior to the Italian composure and magnificence: but it was prodigious, that, in a time of such publique consternation, such a vanity should be kept up or permitted. I being engaged with company, could not decently resist the going to see it, though my heart smote me for it." The consternation here alluded to, was occasioned by the recent death of Cromwell. We learn something of the taste of that age, in regard to *spectacle,* from a scene in this piece, which is thus described in the stage directions: "A doleful pavin, (a slow and grave piece of music, so called from its resembling the motion of the peacock,) is played to prepare the change of the scene, which represents a dark prison at a great distance; and farther to the view, are discerned racks and other engines of torture, with which the Spaniards are tormenting the natives and English mariners, who may be supposed to be lately landed there to discover the coast. Two Spaniards are likewise discovered sitting in their cloaks, and appearing more solemn in ruffs, with rapiers and daggers by their sides; the one turning a spit, while the other is basting an Indian prince, who is roasted at an artificial fire."

The testimony of Evelyn, who, as we have already seen, was acquainted with the state of the opera in Italy, is decisive of the fact that these

dramas of Davenant's were operas after the Italian way, and in recitative, however inferior they may have been to the Italian operas which he had seen, in respect to the composition of the music, and the magnificence of the representation. It is evident, too, that Davenant understood what were the peculiar features of the musical drama. In his piece, called *The Playhouse to Let*, a musician, who presents himself as a tenant for the playhouse, being asked what use he intended to make of it, answers, "I would have introduced heroique story in *stilo recitativo*:" and, upon being desired to explain himself further, he says, "Recitative musick is not composed of matter so familiar as may serve for every low occasion of discourse. In tragedy, the language of the stage is raised above the common dialect, our passions rising with the height of verse; and vocal musick adds new wings to all the flights of poetry." No musical critic of our own day could more justly express the character and office of recitative.

Davenant's pieces, though they contributed greatly to the progress of the musical drama in England, have little poetical merit. Of their music there seem to be no remains. It was in these pieces that female performers first appeared on the stage. It has been said that there were no actresses on the English stage before the Restoration; and that the celebrated Mrs. Betterton was the first. It is true that the first formal licence

for their appearance was contained in the patent granted to Sir William Davenant, immediately after the Restoration; but it appears to have been previously tolerated, for a Mrs. Coleman represented *Ianthe,* in the first part of *The Siege of Rhodes,* in 1656.

After the Restoration, two theatres were established in London by royal licence; the one was the *King's* theatre, in Drury-lane, and the other the *Duke's,* (which was Davenant's theatre,) in Lincoln's-inn-fields. Cibber says, that, in the contest between the two companies for public favour, that of the King had the advantage; and that, therefore, "Sir William Davenant, master of the Duke's company, to make head against their success, was forced to add spectacle and music to action, and to introduce a new species of plays, since called dramatic operas, of which kind were *The Tempest, Psyche, Circe,* and others, all set off with the most expensive decorations of scenes and habits, with the best voices and dancers." This, however, is incorrect; for none of the above plays were performed under the management of Sir William Davenant, or even in his lifetime. Sir William died in 1668. *The Tempest,* made into an opera by Shadwell, and set to music by Matthew Lock, was first performed in 1673. In the same year appeared the opera of *Psyche,* also written by Shadwell and set to music by Lock and Battista Draghi; in 1674, *Macbeth* was brought out, as altered by

Davenant; and in 1676 was produced the opera of *Circe*, written by Dr. Charles Davenant, Sir William's son, with music by John Banister. These pieces were got up at an enormous expense, in music, dancing, machinery, scenes, and decorations, in order to rival the performances of the French stage; and some of the most eminent Parisian dancers were brought over to perform in them. But at length, in 1682 (according to Cibber) the duke's company not being able to support itself separately, united with the king's, and both were incorporated under the title of the King's Company of Comedians.

After the Restoration, the theatres, which in the time of James I. were no less than seventeen in number, were reduced to the two which have been mentioned. But their diminution in number was compensated by their increased magnitude and splendour. The old playhouses were either a large room in some noted tavern, or a slight building in a garden or open space behind it. The pit was unfloored; and the spectators either stood, or were badly accommodated with benches. There were hardly any attempts at scenery or decorations; and the music consisted of a few violins, hautboys, and flutes, on which vulgar tunes were played in unison, and in a wretched manner. But the two houses erected after the Restoration were truly and emphatically styled theatres, as being constructed so as to accommodate a large public assembly, adorned with

painting and sculpture, provided with a proper stage, and with scenes and machinery, to gratify the eye and produce theatrical illusion. A regular band of musicians was placed in the orchestra, who, between the acts, performed pieces of music composed for that purpose, and called act-tunes; and also accompanied the vocal music sung on the stage, and played the music of the dances. Music thus became attached to the theatres, which, from this time, became the principal nurseries of musicians, both composers and performers. The most favourite music was that which was heard in the dramatic pieces of the day; and to sing and play the songs, dances, and act-tunes of the theatres became a general amusement in fashionable society.

Matthew Lock, the composer of *Psyche* and *Macbeth*, was born at Exeter, and brought up as a chorister in the cathedral of that city. We have no particulars of his life earlier than the year 1657, when he published a work called "a small consort of three parts, for viols or violins." He was employed to compose the music for the public entry of Charles II. at the Restoration, and was soon afterwards appointed composer in ordinary to the king. Some of his compositions appear in the second part of Playford's continuation of Hilton's collection, entitled *Catch that Catch can;* and, among others, his three-part glee, "Ne'er trouble thyself about times or their turning," a simple and pleasing production. In the latter part of his life he became

a Roman Catholic, and was appointed organist to Queen Catherine of Portugal, the consort of Charles II., who was permitted the exercise of her religion, and had a chapel with a regular establishment. Lock died in 1687.

The music of the opera of *Psyche* was printed in 1675, under the following title: "The English Opera, or the vocal music in *Psyche*, with the instrumental therein intermixed. To which is adjoined, the instrumental music in the *Tempest*. By Matthew Lock, composer in ordinary to his majesty, and organist to the queen." Prefixed to it there is a preface of some length, written in a rough and vigorous style, and strongly characteristic of the irascible disposition which Lock is said to have possessed. On this account, and as it throws some light on the state of dramatic music at that time, it is worthy of quotation.

"That poetry and music, the chief manifesters of harmonical fancy, should produce such discordant effects in many, is more to be pitied than wondered at; it being become a kind of fashionable wit to peck and carp at other men's conceptions, how mean soever their own are. Expecting, therefore, to fall under the lash of some soft-headed or hard-hearted composer (for there are too many better at finding of faults than mending them,) I shall endeavour to remove those few blocks which perhaps they may take occasion to stumble at.

"The first may be the title, *opera*. To this I

must answer, that the word is borrowed of the Italians, who by it distinguish their comedies from their operas; those, a short plot being laid, the comedians, according to their different themes given, speak and act *extempore;* but these, after much consideration, industry and pains for splendid scenes and machines to illustrate the grand design, with art are composed in such kinds of music as the subject requires; and accordingly performed. Proportionable to which are these compositions (the reader being referred to the book of the whole work for the particular excellences,) their nature for the most part being soft, easy, and as far as my ability could reach, agreeable to the design of the author: for in them you have from ballad to single air, counterpoint, recitative, fugue, canon, and chromatic music; which variety (without vanity be it said) was never in court or theatre till now presented in this nation: though I must confess there has been something done (and more by me than any other) of this kind, and therefore it may justly wear the title, though all the tragedy be not in music; for the author prudently considered, that, though Italy was and is the great academy of the world for that science, England is not; and therefore mixt it with interlocutions, as more proper to our genius.

"Another may be, *The extreme compass of some of the parts.* To which the idols of their own imagination may be pleased (if possible) to know, that he who composes for voices, not considering their

extent, is like a botching stult, who, being obliged to make habits for men, cuts them out for children. *I suppose* it needs no explication.

" The next may be, *The extravagancies in some parts of the composition*, wherein (as among slender grammarians) they may think fixt rules are broken : but they may be satisfied, that whatever appears so, is only by way of transition from time or half-time concords, and covered by extreme parts ; or to suspend the ear and judgment, for satisfying both in the cadence.

" Then, against the performance, *They sing out of tune.* To which with modesty it may be answered, *He or she that is without fault may cast the first stone ;* and for those seldom defects, the major part of the vocal performers being ignorant of music, their excellencies when they do well, which generally are so, rather ought to be admired than their accidental mistakes upbraided.

" The next (and I hope the last) is, or may be, *Why, after so long exposed, is it now printed?*

" First, to manifest my duty to several persons of honour, who expected it.

" Secondly, to satisfy those lovers and understanders of music, whose business or distance prevented their seeing and hearing it.

" Thirdly, that those for whom it was composed (though perchance ignorant of the quality) by the quantity may be convinced, the composing and teaching it was not in a dream ; and, consequently,

that if the expense they have been at do not answer their big expectation, the fault's their own, not mine.

"Finally (by way of caution) to prevent what differences may happen between them and whoever they may have occasion to employ for the future, that on either side there be no dependence on good words or generosity."

In conformity with the views contained in this preface, Lock adopted the method, which has been generally adhered to in later times, of having the chief part of the dialogue delivered in ordinary speech, intermixing it with songs and choruses. In the songs for single voices, the melody is a sort of compound of recitative and air, with frequent changes of measure, in the style of Lulli, which was fashionable at the court of Charles II., and which Lock probably found it necessary to imitate. We find in them many traits of genius. There is one scene, in particular, "a rocky desart full of dreadful caves and cliffs," in which "two despairing men and two despairing women enter," and sing the torments of unhappy love: where there are bold and striking musical phrases, expressing passion in a manner worthy of Purcell. The choruses are generally superior to the songs. They are more free and rhythmical in movement, and contain a great deal of good, solid, and pure harmony. One of them, a chorus of devils and furies, at the beginning of the fifth act, in six real parts (two trebles,

counter tenor, tenor, and two basses) is admirable. These choruses, in short, appear to us to have much more merit than has been generally ascribed to them, and to be by no means unworthy, (as they have been said to be) of the author of the music in *Macbeth*.

The music composed by Lock for this tragedy, which appeared only a year after the *Tempest* and *Psyche*, is of such transcendant excellence, that its beauties have suffered no decay at the distance of more than a century and a half, and it promises to partake of the immortality of the great work with which it is associated. Its superiority to Lock's previous works, and the circumstance of its not having been published with his name in his own time, have given rise to doubts of his claim to its authorship; but we cannot discover any good foundation for them. Lock is named as the composer of this music by contemporaries, and particularly by Downes, the author of the *Roscius Anglicanus*, who, from his own personal knowledge, gives a minute account of the proceedings of the Duke's theatre during the period in question.

The music in *Macbeth* is a pure emanation of genius. The author seems to have been inspired by his subject, and to havebeen freed, by the force of his imagination, from the trammels of imitation, and adherence to the style of his day. In the music of every period there is always a body of conventional forms and phrases which become, as it

were, the common property of contemporary composers; and from the use of which, the period to which a composition belongs may in general be pretty accurately assigned. In the music of Macbeth there is little of this. The melody, unlike that of the time, is flowing, and highly rhythmical, while it is full of energy and expression. The harmony is rich and grateful, free from elaborate intricacy or petty details, and thrown into masses of astonishing breadth and grandeur. The sort of recitative, or rather *aria parlante* of the opening dialogue, "Speak, sister, speak," is different from anything we have met with, either in ancient or modern music; and yet it is so simple and natural that one can hardly imagine the words uttered in any other accents. What genius there is in the chorus, "We should rejoice!" There is a character of demoniacal joy about it that would be absolutely appalling, if such pains were not taken, in our theatres, to mar the effect of this fine music, by the preposterous absurdity of the spectacle.* There are passages, too, of great elegance and beauty; but the music is always characteristic. The air, for instance, "Let's have a dance upon the heath," is exquisitely graceful; and yet there is a touch in it of gloomy melancholy, in perfect keeping with the unearthly scene. The music in Macbeth, in short, was not only a stupendous effort of genius, con-

* This is no longer the case at Covent Garden, under the management of Mr Macready.

sidering the state of music in England when it was written, but is, to this day, one of the noblest and most beautiful works that ever has been produced by an English musician.

The fashionable taste in music, at this period, was much influenced by the residence, in London, of the celebrated Hortensia Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin. This lady, though an Italian by birth, had resided, from her infancy, at the French court, and was the object of universal admiration from her beauty and wit. Charles the Second, when at Paris, before his restoration, was smitten with her charms, and endeavoured to obtain her in marriage: but her politic uncle, Cardinal Mazarin, not foreseeing the prosperous change in the fortunes of the British prince, refused his consent. She was afterwards married to the Duke de la Meilleraie, from whom, in a few years, she separated, leaving him possessed of the immense fortune, twenty millions of livres, (near a million sterling,) which the cardinal had left her. In the year 1675, she came to England, in consequence of the intrigues of a party at the English court, who were desirous to get rid of the Duchess of Portsmouth, and hoped that the revival of the king's passion for his "old love" might destroy the ascendancy of the reigning favourite. As soon as she arrived, the king gave her a pension of 4,000*l.* a year; but she neglected her game, and even engaged in another amour; a piece of imprudence quite un-

expected on the part of so thorough-paced an *intrigante*, but which defeated the object for which she came to England.

This lady, who, to the fascinations of extraordinary wit and beauty, joined a total destitution of every religious and moral principle, was certainly one of the most dangerous women of her time, and contributed, in no small degree, to the corruption of manners which then prevailed among the English aristocracy. Even her worldly uncle, Cardinal Mazarin, was shocked with her open disregard of the duties of religion. He one day told her and her sister, Madame de Bouillon, that they had neither piety nor honour; adding, "at least, if you will not hear mass for God's sake, do it for the world's." The well-known poet, St. Evremond, who appears to have been concerned in the intrigues connected with her coming to England, resided with her at Chelsea, and gives an account of her manner of living there. She had a sort of assembly at her house, which was frequented by the principal nobility, and persons distinguished for their wit and talents; and where the amusements consisted of conversation, in which subjects of religion and philosophy, as well as of literature and the fine arts, were discussed with the utmost freedom; deep play; and musical entertainments. Among other novelties, the game of basset was introduced; the bank being kept by a French adventurer of the name of Marin, who shared with the

duchess in the profits of the establishment. The Earl of Godolphin told Sir Robert Walpole, that he had played at the duchess of Mazarin's, and that, in consideration of her poverty, it was customary to leave a guinea under the cloth upon the table.

The musical entertainments at the house of the duchess were chiefly dramatic, and are celebrated for their magnificence. The singers were the principal female performers from the theatres, and the instrumental band consisted of the most eminent masters of the time. Sir John Hawkins says, "It is supposed that the design of introducing the Italian opera into England was first concerted in this assembly." We can see no grounds for this supposition. There is no appearance of any attempt having been made by the duchess of Mazarin, or the aristocratic members of her musical coterie, to introduce the Italian opera. Nor is it at all likely that there should. If not born, she was educated, a Frenchwoman, and derived all her opinions and tastes from the court of Louis XIV., where she never could have acquired a predilection for Italian music. Had she entertained any such design, moreover, her first step towards the introduction of the Italian opera would have been to make her own dramatic entertainments of that description. But the music at her concerts was French, and under the direction of Paisible, a French musician of considerable eminence. It

seems evident, therefore, that the duchess of Mazarin, by her entertainments, so much frequented by the world of fashion, contributed to foster and preserve the taste for French music which prevailed during the whole of Charles the Second's reign, and gave way, not to the influence of Italian music, but to the native genius of Purcell.

CHAPTER VI.

Dryden—"*The State of Innocence—Albion and Albanius* —. Purcell—*Dido and Æneas* — Purcell's instrumental music—*The Tempest.*

About this time Dryden turned his attention to the musical drama. In 1678 he published his play, called *The State of Innocence, and Fall of Man*, which he formally denominated an opera. This, however, is an improper designation ; for the piece contains no lyrical poetry, the music employed in it being entirely instrumental. It was never performed, nor can we suppose that it was ever intended for actual representation. Such scenes as the following could not be exhibited on the stage.

"Scene I. represents a chaos, or a confused mass of matter ; the stage is almost wholly dark : a symphony of warlike music is heard for some time ; then from the heavens (which are opened) fall the rebellious angels, wheeling in air, and seeming transfixed with thunderbolts. The bottom

of the stage, being opened, receives the angels, who fall out of sight. Tunes of victory are played and an hymn sung; angels discovered above, brandishing their swords; the music ceasing, and the heavens being closed, the scene shifts, and on a sudden represents hell; part of the scene is a lake of brimstone, or rolling fire; the earth of a burnt colour; the fallen angels appear on the lake, lying prostrate: a tune of horror and lamentation is heard." Lucifer, raising himself on the burning lake, begins the piece by exclaiming,—

> "Is this the seat our conqueror has given?
> And this the climate we must change for heaven?"

Other devils rise in succession; and an infernal council is held, like that in the opening of the *Paradise Lost.*

Adam and Eve are afterwards introduced, "as just created." The manners and conversation of the primeval pair, as represented by Dryden, exhibit marks of the false and corrupted taste of the age. There is a want of the purity and simplicity in the sentiments and images, which are so beautifully preserved by Milton; and Eve espepecially, at the very outset, evinces no inconsiderable share of vanity, coquetry, and love of rule, from which the "general mother" of the fair sex must surely have been wholly free in the "state of innocence." She enters, wondering at herself—

" Like myself I see nothing: from each tree
The feather'd kind peep down to look on me;
And beasts, with up-cast eyes, forsake their shade,
And gaze, as if I were to be obey'd.
Sure I am something which they wish to be,
And cannot; I myself am proud of me."

How quick-sighted to the general admiration she excites; and what *naïveté* in " *I myself am proud of me!*" In the same spirit is her apprehension that, when she grants her lover's suit, she will lose her much-loved sovereignty; and her fears of his *infidelity* have almost the effect of burlesque.

It is difficult to imagine what could have induced Dryden to think of this production. In his preface he gives some reasons for " publishing an opera which was never acted." Many incorrect copies, he says, had got abroad, full of errors and absurdities, so that he was obliged to publish, in self-defence. He confesses his obligations to Milton, and acknowledges the inferiority of his " mean production" to the sublime work of that poet. Knowing, perhaps, that Milton had taken the idea of the *Paradise Lost* from an Italian mystery, and that he had intended at first to give his poem a dramatic form, Dryden may have thought of accomplishing the design which Milton had abandoned. It is said by Aubrey, that Dryden made a personal application to Milton for permission to make the attempt; and that the old poet answered

with indifference, "Aye, you may *tag* my verses if you will."*

Dryden's first opera, that was actually represented, was *Albion and Albanius*, which was performed at the Duke's Theatre, in 1685. This piece was nearly finished in the lifetime of Charles II., though not performed till after his death. It had a political object, to favour the interest of the court; and was an allegorical representation of the restoration of the Stuart family to the throne, and the king's recent victory over his Whig opponents. It contains the leading incidents in the life of Charles II.; the Restoration, and return of the king and the Duke of York, under the names of Albion and Albanius; and the popish plot, hatched by a council of fiends, who send Democracy and Zeal, with Dr. Titus Oates in their train, to propagate it on earth. The return of the Duke of York and his beautiful princess, and the rejoicings in heaven and earth on the king's attaining complete power, were the intended termination of the

* The Italian Mystery which suggested to Milton the subject of the Paradise Lost, is the *Adamo* of Adreini, in which the sacred subject, as usual with those productions, is unintentionally burlesqued. The drama opens with a grand chorus of angels, who sing thus;—

"Let the rainbow be the fiddle-stick of the fiddle of heaven,
Let the spheres be the strings, and the stars the musical notes;
Let the new-born breezes make the pauses and sharps,
And let Time be careful to beat the measure."

drama: but, in consequence of the death of Charles, the conclusion was changed to the apotheosis of Albion, and the succession of Albanius to the uncontrolled dominion over a willing people.

It may easily be imagined that a piece of this political character, produced at a time when the nation was almost ripe for the revolution which took place within three years afterwards, could not be very congenial to the public feeling. It was brought upon the stage with great splendour, but was coldly received. Its death-blow was the news of Monmouth's invasion, which reached London on Saturday the 13th of June, 1685, during its performance for the sixth time: the audience broke up in confusion, and it was never repeated.

This piece, notwithstanding its unhappy subject, is full of Dryden's characteristic vigour of thought and expression; and the lyrical poetry, in particular, is beautifully sweet and flowing. The preface is excellent. Though Dryden could not have been conversant with the Italian opera, yet the acuteness of his mind enabled him to form a clear conception of the musical drama, and to give rules for its composition and performance which, in many respects, are of permanent and universal application.

"An opera," he says, "is a poetical tale or fiction, represented by vocal and instrumental music, adorned with scenes, machines, and dancing. The supposed persons of this musical drama are

generally supernatural, as gods and goddesses, and heroes, which at least are descended from them, and are in due time to be adopted into their number. The subject, therefore, being extended beyond the limits of human nature, admits of that sort of marvellous and surprising conduct which is rejected in other plays. Human impossibilities are to be received as they are in faith; because, when gods are introduced, a supreme power is to be understood, and second causes are out of doors; yet propriety is to be observed even here. Phœbus must foretel, Mercury must charm with his caduceus, and Juno must reconcile the quarrels of the marriage bed: to conclude, they must all act according to their distinct and peculiar characters. If the persons represented were to speak upon the stage, it would follow, of necessity, that the expressions should be lofty, figurative, and majestical: but the nature of an opera denies the frequent use of these poetical ornaments; for vocal music, though it often admits a loftiness of sound, yet always exacts an harmonious sweetness; or, to distinguish yet more justly, the recitative part of the opera requires a more masculine beauty of expression and sound. The other, which, for want of a proper English word, I must call the *songish* part, must abound in the softness and variety of numbers; its principal intention being to please the hearing, rather than to gratify the understanding. As the first inventors of any art or science, provided they

have brought it to perfection, are, in reason, to give laws to it; so, whosoever undertakes the writing of an opera, is obliged to imitate the Italians, who have not only invented but perfected this sort of dramatic musical entertainment. We know that, for some centuries, the knowledge of music has flourished principally in Italy, the mother of learning and of arts; that poetry and painting have been there restored, and so cultivated by Italian masters, that all Europe has been enriched out of their treasury.

"It is almost needless to speak anything of that noble language in which the musical drama was first invented and performed. All who are conversant in the Italian cannot but observe that it is the softest, the sweetest, the most harmonious, not only of any modern tongue, but even beyond any of the learned. It seems indeed to have been invented for the sake of poetry and music: the vowels are so abounding in all words, especially in terminations of them, that, excepting in some few monosyllables, the whole language ends in them. Then the pronunciation is so manly and so sonorous, that their very speaking has more music in it than Dutch poetry and song. It has withal derived so much copiousness and eloquence from the Greek and Latin, in the composition of words and the formation of them, that if, after all, we must call it barbarous, it is the most beautiful and learned of any barbarian in modern tongues; and

we may at least as justly praise it as Pyrrhus did the Roman discipline and martial order, that it was of barbarians, (for so the Greeks called all other nations,) but had in it nothing of barbarity. This language has, in a manner, been refined and purified from the Gothic ever since the days of Dante, which is above four hundred years ago: and the French, who now cast a longing eye to their country, are not less ambitious to possess their elegance in poetry and music; in both which they labour at impossibilities. It is true, indeed, they have reformed their tongue, and brought both their prose and poetry to a standard; the sweetness, as well as the purity, is much improved, by throwing off the unnecessary consonants, which made their spelling tedious and their pronunciation harsh; but after all, as nothing can be improved beyond its own species, or farther than its original nature will allow—as an ill voice, though ever so thoroughly instructed in the rules of music, can be never brought to sing harmoniously, nor many an honest critic ever arrive to be a good poet; so neither can the natural harshness of the French, or their perpetual ill accent, be ever refined into perfect harmony like the Italian. The English has yet more natural disadvantages than the French; our original Teutonic, consisting mostly in monosyllables, and these encumbered with consonants, cannot possibly be freed from those inconveniencies. The rest of our words, which are derived from the Latin chiefly,

and the French, with some small sprinklings of Greek, Italian, and Spanish, are some relief in poetry, and help us to soften our uncouth numbers; which, together with our English genius, incomparably beyond the trifling of the French, in the nobler parts of verse, will justly give us the pre-eminence. But, on the other hand, the effeminacy of our pronunciation (a defect common to us and the Danes) and our scarcity of female rhymes, have left the advantage of musical composition for songs, though not for recitative, to our neighbours."

When Dryden, in this fine passage, speaks of the Italian Opera as being in its subject confined in a great measure to the persons and incidents of the ancient mythology, he gives an exact description of it as it then existed: though the range of the Italian *opera seria* is now co-extensive with that of tragedy. But when he speaks of the composition of the different kinds of poetry which belong to the musical drama, his principles are applicable to all countries and all times. The Italian language has never received a nobler or juster eulogy: but when he describes the English as being inferior to the French in respect to euphony and fitness for lyrical purposes, he delivers an opinion in which few of his countrymen, in our days, will acquiesce. It is difficult to understand what is meant by the effeminacy of pronunciation which he describes as being prevalent in his time. Whatever it was, it

seems to have been some fashion which has passed away: for there is nothing in the modern pronunciation of English, as the language is plainly and unaffectedly spoken in the pulpit or the senate, at the bar, on the stage, or in good society, that can be characterised as effeminate. As a musical language, though the English, like all other languages, must yield to the Italian in smoothness, clearness, and facility of utterance, yet, in all these particulars, it is unquestionably superior to the French. But when Dryden wrote the opera to which this preface was prefixed, the *Gallomania* raged at the English court; and Dryden, as the poet of the court, doubtless found it convenient to flatter the fashionable taste, of which the king himself was the principal votary.

That Dryden was desirous to court the favour of Charles, by yielding to his French prepossessions, is evident from his employing Grabut, a Frenchman, to compose the music of *Albion and Albanius*, though he could not have been ignorant of the infinitely superior merit of his countryman Purcell, whose transcendent genius had already broke out in all its splendour. This Grabut was an obscure musician, whose name is not to be found in the French annals of the art. He appears to have come to England with Cambert, a musician of some eminence, who, about the year 1672, was made master of the king's band. Grabut composed the music to a translation of Cambert's French

opera of Ariadne; or, more probably, only adapted Cambert's original music to the English words. This piece, which was performed with little success, in 1674, seems to have been the only work of Grabut's prior to *Albion and Albanius:* but he was in favour at court, and was consequently employed by Dryden.

The poet, however, appears to have thought that this step required some justification. In the preface, from which we have already quoted, he informs the public, that the opera had been rehearsed several times in presence of the king, "who had publicly declared, more than once, that the compositions and choruses were more just, and more beautiful, than any he had heard in England." Dryden then praises Grabut very warmly; and adds;—"This I say, not to flatter him, but to do him right: because, among some English musicians, and their scholars, who are sure to judge after them, the imputation of being a Frenchman is enough to make a party who maliciously endeavour to decry him. But the knowledge of Latin and Italian poets, both which he possesses, besides his skill in music, and his being acquainted with all the performances of the French operas, adding to these the good sense to which he is born, have raised him to a degree above any man who shall pretend to be his rival on our stage. When any of our countrymen excel him, I shall be glad, for the sake of Old England, to be shown my error: in the meantime,

let virtue be commended, though in the person of a stranger." This passage gave great and general dissatisfaction. The original offence of giving the preference to an obscure and worthless musician was aggravated by the injurious and disparaging manner in which, to exalt his character, the English musicians, including the already illustrious Purcell, were treated. The consequence was, that Dryden was exposed, not only to serious attacks, but to squibs and lampoons of the most severe and poignant description.

The following is the conclusion of the scene in which the Popish Plot is hatched by a pandemonian council of fiends and infernal deities. The description of the notorious Dr. Titus Oates could hardly be paralleled in strength of invective. When *Zelota* is about to be dismissed on her errand to stir up evil against the king, she says :—

"You've all forgot
To forge a plot
In seeming care of Albion's life;
Inspire the crowd
With clamours loud,
To involve his brother and his wife.

Alecto. Take, of a thousand souls at thy command,
The basest, blackest of the Stygian band,
One that will swear to all they can invent,
So thoroughly damn'd that he ne'er can repent:
One, often sent to earth
And still at every birth
He took a deeper stain:
One, that in Adam's time was Cain;

One, that was burnt in Sodom's flame,
For crimes even here too black to name:
One, who through every flame of ill has run:
One, who in Naboth's days was Belial's son:
One, who has gain'd a body fit for sin:
Where all his crimes
Of former times
Lie crowded in a skin.

Pluto. Take him,
Make him
What you please;
For he can be
A rogue with ease,
One for mighty mischief born;
He can swear and be forsworn.

Pluto and Alecto. Take him, make him, what you please,
For he can be a rogue with ease.*

Pluto. Let us laugh, let us laugh, let us laugh at our woes,
The wretch that is damned hath nothing to lose.
Ye Furies, advance
With the ghosts in a dance:
'Tis a jubilee when the world is in trouble;
When the people rebel
We frolic in hell;
But when the king falls, the pleasure is double.

[*A single entry of a devil, followed by an entry of twelve devils.*]

Chorus. Let us laugh, let us laugh, let us laugh, at our woes,
The wretch that is damned hath nothing to lose."

In the preface to *Albion and Albanius*, Dryden says that this opera "was only intended as a

* Oates was alive at this time, and lived many years afterwards. He shook off, in some degree, the load of infamy which had overwhelmed him; regained some footing in society; and was rewarded for his virtues, by King William, with a pension of 400*l.* a year!

prologue to a play of the nature of *The Tempest;* which is a tragedy mixed with opera, or a drama written in blank verse, adorned with scenes, machines, songs, and dances ; so that the fable of it is all spoken and acted by the best of the comedians ; the other part of the entertainment to be performed by the same singers and dancers who are introduced in the present opera." The only piece at all answering this description, subsequently produced by him, was *King Arthur*, which seems, therefore, to have been the tragedy here alluded to, though it did not make its appearance till the year 1691, six years afterwards.

During this interval, Dryden seems to have not only acquired a proper sense of the merits of Purcell, but to have entered into friendly intercourse with him. Before taking a review of their joint labours, it may be proper to give a slight sketch of the previous career of this illustrious musician.

Henry Purcell was born in the year 1658. His father, Henry Purcell, was a musician, and one of the gentlemen of the Chapel Royal at the restoration of Charles II. Some of his compositions, which are still extant, indicate a respectable degree of talent and knowledge of his art. He died in 1664, when his son was only six years old. It is not ascertained from whom young Purcell received his first instructions in music ; but it was most probably from Captain Cook,* who was then master of

* See antè, page 116.

the children of the Chapel Royal. He afterwards received lessons from Dr. Blow; a circumstance in the life of that eminent musician which was considered of so much importance, that, in the inscription on his tomb, it is mentioned that he was "Master to the famous Mr. Henry Purcell."

His genius showed itself at a very early age. While he was yet a singing boy in the king's chapel, he composed several anthems, which are sung to this day. This is, perhaps, one of the most remarkable instances of precocity that has been recorded; for the anthem, demanding a knowledge of the laws of counterpoint which, in general, can be obtained only by long and severe study, seems to be in an especial manner beyond the reach of a juvenile composer. To have produced, therefore, pieces of this kind, which, for nearly two centuries, have kept their place among the standard works of our ecclesiastical musicians, indicated an inborn creative power, which, unless to a kindred spirit, is wholly inconceivable.

At the age of eighteen, Purcell received the honourable appointment of organist of Westminster Abbey; and in his twenty-fourth year he was chosen to be one of the three organists of the Chapel Royal. By this time he had composed many of those anthems which are considered as being among the noblest specimens of our cathedral music. Notwithstanding, however, his ecclesiastical situations and employments, he very

early turned his attention to dramatic music, which seems to have been especially congenial to his inclination as well as his genius. Tom Brown, in his letters from the Dead to the Living, notices this bent of Purcell's mind. In a letter from Dr. Blow to Purcell, he makes the writer say, that persons of their profession are equally attracted by the church and the playhouse, so that they are, like Mahomet's coffin, suspended between heaven and earth.*

His first essay in theatrical music was made when he was nineteen. Josiah Priest, a celebrated teacher of dancing, who had long been the composer of the court-ballets, and had consequently acquired a taste for the stage, wished to get up a private dramatic performance by his pupils. He accordingly got Tate to write a little opera, called *Dido and Æneas*, and prevailed on Purcell to compose the music for it. The piece was represented by some of the young ladies who attended Priest's school, before a select audience of their relatives and friends, with great applause. The music, in particular, was found to be beautiful; and, as it is extant, we are enabled to know that this opinion of it was perfectly just.

Dido and Æneas is a wonderful work, considering the youth of the composer. As a whole, it is deficient in the finish and mellowness which characterise the productions of his riper years. But, from beginning to end, it sparkles with genius,

* This joke, by the way, is an anachronism; for Blow survived Purcell.

and contains beauties which even he himself has not surpassed. He was happy in his subject, which was treated by Mr. Priest with good dramatic effect. The piece opens with the arrival of Æneas at Carthage, and ends with the death of Dido, after her desertion by her faithless lover. Dido's recitative, in which, after she has been listening to Æneas's story, she expresses her admiration of her guest, affords instances of that false expression, produced by seizing upon particular words, which is so common among composers, but is rarely to be found in Purcell's later works. Dido says,

> "Whence could so much virtue spring?
> What storms, what battles, did he sing!
> Anchises' valour, mix'd with Venus' charms;
> How soft in peace, and yet how fierce in arms!"

One unmingled sentiment of pleasure and admiration pervades this passage: yet, when Dido comes to the word "soft" she falls upon it by a chromatic semitone, and repeats it twice with a languishing *appoggiatura;* and in an instant afterwards breaks out into a boisterous roulade upon the word "fierce." The word "storms," too, gives occasion for a little musical mimicry. Another fault of a similar kind occurs in the scene where Dido and Æneas are overtaken by the storm. Dido exclaims,

> "The skies are clouded; hark how thunder
> Rends the mountain rocks asunder!"

According to the approved principles of musical painting, the war of the elements should have been

depicted by the tumultuous sounds of the orchestra, the voice using the simple accents of exclamation. But, instead of this, Dido sets about mimicking the thunder, by rolling out that word in a long, rattling roulade. These things should be marked, in the works of the greatest masters, as beacons to be avoided; as students are fully as apt to copy the faults as the beauties of their models.

The fault in the first passage above quoted is redeemed by the true and beautiful expression given to the phrase immediately following, where Dido says, "But ah! I fear I pity him too much!" and by the lovely chorus,

> "Fear no danger to ensue,
> The hero loves as well as you;"

sung, to re-assure her, by Anna and her other attendants. Its graceful tranquillity is perfectly delicious. The chorus "To the hills and the vales, to the rocks and the mountains," is "redolent of spring," and full of the most delightful freshness. But, to our feeling, the flow of the melody is checked, and its beauty impaired, by a single crude note—the B *flat* suddenly introduced (the key being G major) at the words "cool shady fountains;" an unnecessary and unsuccessful attempt at musical expression where it is not wanted.

The introduction of a malignant sorceress, by whose machinations Æneas is made to abandon his mistress, gives occasion for a great deal of admirable music. The invocation by the sorceress, and

the choral responses and wild laughter of the infernal spirits, are striking and unearthly, and would have as powerful an effect as anything in the *Freischutz*. The little duet in this scene, between two of the witches, "But ere we this perform," in free canon, is remarkable for its ingenuity of contrivance, and easy flow of melody : and the full chorus which follows, and concludes the scene, has the broad simplicity of Matthew Lock.

The second act is full of beauties. In the scene in which the lovers and their attendants, while hunting, are overtaken by the storm, the chorus "Haste, haste, to the town," by the intricate movement of the parts, paints the confusion and agitation of the party. A chorus of Æneas's sailors, preparing to weigh anchor, is of a bold and somewhat comic character. We are again introduced to the infernal conclave, whose chorus of demoniacal exultation at Dido's approaching fate, is one of the most powerful of Purcell's compositions. The impassioned dialogue between the lovers, as they are about to part, is a beautiful specimen of true English recitative, in which the accents and inflexions of the language are made subservient to the purposes of musical expression. The last words of the queen are formed into a little air, "When I am laid in earth," which sounds like the dying murmurs of a broken heart. The melody is constructed on a ground bass ; a form of composition now obso-

lete, as imposing needless restrictions on the musician. Yet sometimes, as in the present instance, it is a source of beauty. The recurrence, over and over again, of the same few melancholy notes in the bass, strikes sadly on the ear, and deepens the expression of the song. The piece concludes with a soft mournful chorus.

This beautiful opera, which was produced in 1677, immediately attracted the attention of the managers of the theatres, and led to Purcell's being engaged in writing for the stage.

The musical drama not having yet a separate existence, it was still customary to introduce music into both tragedy and comedy. Most of the plays of that time had overtures and pieces to be performed between the acts, composed expressly for them; and incidental songs, not sung by the personages of the drama, but by singers introduced, as it were, for their entertainment. From this time, these overtures, act-tunes, and songs, were frequently composed by Purcell. In this manner, he embellished, as it may be called, the play of *Abelazor*, which appeared in 1677; *Timon of Athens*, (altered from Shakspeare by Shadwell) in 1678; Lee's *Theodosius, or the Force of Love*, in 1680; and other pieces which shall be afterwards mentioned.

A collection of these instrumental pieces was published, in 1697, after Purcell's death, by his widow, under the title of "A Collection of Ayres,

composed for the Theatre, and on other occasions, by the late Mr. Henry Purcell." They are in four parts, for two violins, tenor and bass; and are so pleasing, that they were used in the theatres till the middle of the last century, when the progress of orchestral music necessarily caused them to be laid aside.

In 1683, he published twelve sonatas for two violins and a bass, with a preface containing the following interesting passage, in which he admits his obligations to the Italian composers. "The author has faithfully endeavoured a just imitation of the most famed Italian masters, principally to bring the seriousness and gravity of that sort of music into vogue and reputation among our countrymen, whose humour it is time now should begin to loathe the levity and balladry of our neighbours. The attempt he confesses to be bold and daring; there being pens and artists of more eminent abilities, much better qualified for the employment than his or himself, which he well hopes these his weak endeavours will in due time provoke and inflame to a more accurate undertaking. He is not ashamed to own his unskilfulness in the Italian language, but that is the unhappiness of his education, which cannot justly be counted his fault; however, he thinks he may warrantably affirm, that he is not mistaken in the power of the Italian notes, or elegancy of their compositions." This work was so well received, that he soon afterwards pub-

lished another set, containing ten sonatas, one of which, from its peculiar excellence, acquired the name of the *Golden Sonata*.

These sonatas, or trios, evidently belong to the same school as those of Corelli. The trios of the great Italian composer were published in the same year, and could not have served as a model to Purcell, who, in acknowledging his obligation to "the most famed Italian masters" in this species of composition, must have alluded to Torelli and Bassani, the latter of whom was Corelli's master. Purcell's sonatas, in some respects, are even superior to those of the great Italian composer;—for they contain movements which, in depth of learning and ingenuity of harmonical combination, without the least appearance of labour or restraint, surpass anything to be found in the works of Corelli: but Corelli had the advantage of being a great violinist, while Purcell, who was not only no performer himself, but probably had never heard a great performer, had no means, except the perusal of Italian scores, of forming an idea of the genius and powers of the instrument. This disadvantage prevented Purcell from striking out new and effective violin passages, and produced mechanical awkwardness which a master of the instrument would have avoided: but it did not disable him from exhibiting taste and fancy; and every admirer of the works of Corelli will take pleasure in these sonatas of Purcell.

Dryden, who had done Purcell injustice, afterwards became his warm friend and one of his greatest admirers. After the death of Charles II. the poet must have found himself freed from the trammels imposed on him by the vitiated taste of that monarch and his court, and a personal intercourse between Dryden and Purcell arose from the circumstance of Purcell's having been the musical instructor of Lady Elizabeth Howard, the poet's wife. When the play of *The Tempest* was revived in 1690, Purcell was employed to compose new music for it.

The Tempest had been altered from Shakspeare by Davenant and Dryden, and represented at Davenant's theatre in 1667. In the preface, which is written by Dryden, he says, "Sir William Davenant did me the honour to join me with him in the alteration of this play:" but what share Dryden had in the alterations does not appear. They appear to have been chiefly made by Davenant; though they bear many marks of Dryden's hand. The play, as thus altered, was published in the year 1670.

Shakspeare's play underwent these alterations for the purpose, chiefly, of affording room for scenic decoration and music. But this might have been done without the interpolation of so much inferior matter, and the introduction of those characters which destroy the majestic simplicity of the origi-

nal design. The idea of contrasting Shakspeare's original character of a woman who has never seen a man, with a man who has never seen a woman, is puerile in itself, and, in its execution, wanting in refinement and purity. That which, in Miranda, is charming innocence and simplicity, becomes unmanly silliness in the counterpart; and the character of Dorinda, the sister given to Miranda, is not only unnecessary, but indelicate. The play, thus metamorphosed, cannot be read (for it is now never represented) without disgust; and it is surprising, that Dryden (who, in the prologue to this very piece, has paid so noble a tribute to the genius of Shakspeare) could have lent his sanction to such an act of sacrilege.

When the music came to be composed by Purcell, several additions were made to the lyrical portion, which are not in the edition of the play published in 1670; and, in other parts, the words are considerably altered.

The music of *The Tempest* consists almost entirely of the songs and choruses of the aërial inhabitants of Prospero's enchanted island, described by the poet as being

> " ——— full of noises,
> Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not."

The strange and wild character of these unearthly strains is beautifully supported, and the listener

partakes of the feeling of the bewildered Ferdinand, when, amazed at the invisible chorus which reminds him of his drowned father, he exclaims,

> " This is no mortal business, nor no sound
> That the earth owes !"

The scene of the spirits deputed to bewilder the conspirators contains the song, "Arise, ye subterranean winds;" a powerful composition, in which rolling divisions, finely adapted to a bass voice, are used with happy imitative effect. In this song, however, Purcell has fallen into the very common error of giving to particular words an expression at variance with the general tone of the poetry. The spirit is commanding the winds to

> " Drive these wretches to that part o' the isle,
> Where nature never yet did smile ;
> Cause fogs and damps, whirlwinds and earthquakes there ;
> There let them howl, and languish in despair."

On the word "howl," the singer howls on one note for two bars. This is a piece of musical mimicry, inconsistent with the gravity of the style; but it is not so bad as the next passage, in which, on the word "languish," the singer languishes, for three bars, through a drawling descent of semitones. Though the spirit desires that the wretches whom he is commissioned to punish may languish in despair, there is no reason that he should assume a languishing air in saying so. Nothing can be more exquisite than the fairy lightness of Ariel's

little song, "Come unto these yellow sands," with its wild and simple burden. The masque, or pageant, presented by Prospero's spirits at the end of the play, is made a vehicle for some charming music. The recitative and air, for a bass (or rather baritone) voice in the character of Neptune, "Æolus, you must appear," is in a grand and dignified style. In the following air, "Come down, my blusterers," Æolus blusters through many long divisions; but the passage,

"To your prisons below,
Down you must go,"

is remarkable for the very impressive utterance given to these words. The soprano air, "Halcyon days," sung by Amphitrite, is perfectly delicious. In this air it is impossible to overlook the beauty of the accompaniments. The charming passages given to the oboes, and the graceful motion of all the instrumental parts, show how much Purcell was in advance of his age, in this as well as other branches of his art. The chorus, "The Nereids and Tritons shall sing and shall play," is beautiful; and the famous duet and chorus, "No stars again shall hurt you," a piece of rich and resonant harmony, forms a brilliant conclusion to the whole. There is a song for Caliban, "The owl is abroad, the bat and the toad," which one might suppose Weber to have imagined.

Some parts of this music may still occasionally be heard at concerts; but it is long since the piece

to which it belongs has been performed. We can hardly, however, imagine a more delightful theatrical entertainment than Shakspeare's beautiful play, unpolluted by Davenant's trash, with the music of Purcell: and we hope yet to see *The Tempest*, in this form, restored to its place on the stage.

CHAPTER VII.

King Arthur—The Indian Queen—Tyrannic Love.

The revival of *The Tempest*, with Purcell's music, in 1690, was followed by the appearance of *King Arthur* in 1691. This piece was written by Dryden, and the music in it composed by Purcell. It was brought out in a splendid manner, and had great success.

King Arthur is a tale of love, war, and enchantment; its incidents are fantastic, but ingenious and entertaining. The story consists of the love of Arthur, the ancient British king, for Emmeline, the daughter of a tributary prince; her abduction by his rival Oswald, a heathen king of Kent; her recovery from his hands, and union with her lover. The evil designs of Oswald are favoured by Osmond, a Saxon magician, and his subservient evil spirits; while they are thwarted by Merlin, the famous enchanter, and the beneficent spirits under his command. The spirits are taken from the Rosicrucian philosophy; Grimbald, the malignant fiend, being a gnome, or spirit of earth, while his adversary,

Philidel, is a sylph, or spirit of air. This machinery is well managed. There is a wild grandeur in the evil nature of Grimbald; and the character of Philidel,—an angel, who, though fallen, is not lost, but feels repentance and hopes for pardon,—is original and beautiful. The blindness of Emmeline adds interest to her innocent simplicity, and gives rise to many pretty and fanciful passages.

In the first scene, Arthur and Conon, Emmeline's father, are engaged in discourse. She enters.

" *Em.* O father, father, I am sure you're here,
Because I see your voice.
Arth. No; thou mistak'st thy hearing for thy sight:
He's gone, my Emmeline;
And I but stay to gaze on those fair eyes,
Which cannot view the conquests they have made.
Oh starlike night, dark only to thyself,
But full of glory, as those lamps of heaven,
That see not, when they shine!
Em. What is this heaven, and stars, and night, and day,
To which you thus compare my eyes and me?
I understand you when you say you love;
For, when my father clasps my hand in his,
That's cold, and I can feel it hard and wrinkled;
But when you grasp it, then I sigh and pant,
And something smarts and tickles at my heart.
Arth. Oh artless love, where the soul moves the tongue,
And only nature speaks what nature thinks!
Had she but eyes!
Em. Just now you said I had:
I see them; I have two.
Arth. But neither see.

Em. I'm sure they hear you, then:
What can your eyes do more?

Arth. They see your beauties.

Em. Do not I see? You have a face like mine—
Two hands, and two round, pretty, rising breasts,
That heave like mine.

Arth. But you describe a woman;
Nor is it sight, but touching with your hands.

Em. Then 'tis my hand that sees, and that's all one,—
For is not seeing, touching with your eyes?

Arth. No; for I see at distance, when I touch not.

Em. If you can see so far, and yet not touch,
I fear you see my naked legs and feet
Quite through my clothes. Pray do not see so well.

Arth. Fear not, sweet innocence;
I view the lovely features of your face,
Your lips' carnation, your dark-shaded eyebrows,
Black eyes and snow-white forehead; all the colours
That make your beauty, and produce my love.

Em. Nay, then, you do not love on equal terms;—
I love you dearly without all these helps;
I cannot see your lips' carnation,
Your shaded eyebrows, nor your milk-white eyes.

Arth. You still mistake.

Em. Indeed I thought you had a nose and eyes,
And such a face as mine: have not men faces?

Arth. Oh, none like yours, so excellently fair.

Em. Then would I had no face, for I would be
Just such a one as you.

Arth. Alas! 'tis vain to instruct your innocence;
You have no notion of light or colours.

[*Trumpet sounds within.*

Em. Why, is not that a trumpet?

Arth. Yes.

Em. I knew it,
And I can tell you how the sound on't looks;
It looks as if it had an angry fighting face.

Arth. 'Tis now indeed a sharp unpleasant sound,
Because it calls me hence from her I love,
To meet ten thousand foes.

Em. How do so many men e'er come to meet?
This devil trumpet vexes them, and then
They feel about for one another's faces;
And so they meet and kill.

Arth. I'll tell you all when we have gain'd the field.
One kiss of your fair hand the pledge of conquest,
And so a short farewell. [*Exit.*

Em. My heart and vows go with him to the fight.
May every foe be that which they call blind,
And none of all their swords have eyes to find him!
But lead me nearer to the trumpet's face;
For that brave sound upholds my fainting heart;
And, while I hear, methinks I fight my part."

The scene in which Emmeline recovers her sight by means of Philidel, is calculated to produce a charming effect on the stage; but we must turn to the musical parts of the drama.

The scene in the first act, of the great sacrifice offered by the Saxons before their battle with the Britons, is full of barbarous grandeur. It opens with the songs of the priests, accompanying the sacrifice of three milk-white steeds to Woden, Thor, and Freya. The choral shout, "We have sacrificed!" at the end of each recitation by a single voice, is magnificent. The men who have devoted themselves as voluntary victims, are addressed by the priests,—

"Brave souls, to be renown'd in story;
Honour prizing, death despising,
Fame acquiring by expiring,—
Die, and reap the fruit of glory!"

This chorus opens with a short but energetic *fugato*, and passes into a dark and gloomy strain. After a pause, a single voice sings, to a bold and lively air—

"I call you all
To Woden's hall,
Your temples round
With ivy bound,
In goblets crown'd
And plenteous bowls of burnish'd gold.
Where ye shall laugh,
And dance, and quaff
The juice that makes the Britons bold."

And the victims respond, in joyous chorus,

"To Woden's hall,
All, all, all, all;
Where in plenteous bowls of burnish'd gold
We shall laugh,
And dance, and quaff
The juice that makes the Britons bold."

The battle-song of the Britons, "Come if you dare," is a noble burst of martial ardour, to which the musician has given full expression. The choral part, written in plain counterpoint, may be conceived to be a whole army's shouts of defiance and of victory.

Arthur being left alone in pursuit of the flying foe, Grimbald, the malignant spirit, accosts him in disguise, and attempts to lead him astray, while Philidel, interposing, warns him of the deceit. Philidel's song, with the chorus of her attendant spirits, —"Hither, hither, this way bend," is exquisitely

light and delicate. Grimbald's air, "Let not a moon-born elf mislead ye," has the plain simplicity of his assumed character, and is at the same time smooth and beautiful. The dramatic effect of this scene is admirable.

The celebrated frost-scene, so well-known to the admirers of Purcell, is a sort of masque, exhibited by the magician Osmond to Emmeline, after she has recovered her sight, for the purpose of inducing her to listen to his addresses. The poetry and music are equally beautiful.

"*Emmeline.* I freeze, as if his impious art had fixed
My feet to earth.

Osmond. But love shall thaw ye.
I'll show his force in countries cak'd with ice,
Where the pale pole-star in the north of heaven
Sits high, and on the frosty winter broods,—
Yet there love reigns: For proof, this magic wand
Shall change the mildness of sweet Britain's clime
To Iceland, and the farthest Thule's frost,
Where the proud god, disdaining winter's bounds,
O'erleaps the fences of eternal snow,
And with his warmth supplies the distant sun.

[*Osmond strikes the ground with his wand; the scene changes to a prospect of winter in frozen countries. Cupid descends.*

Cupid sings. What ho, thou genius of the clime, what ho!
Ly'st thou asleep beneath those hills of snow?
Stretch out thy lazy limbs; awake, awake,
And winter from thy furry mantle shake.

Genius arises.

Genius. What power art thou, who from below
Hast made me rise unwillingly and slow,
From beds of everlasting snow?

See'st thou how stiff and wondrous old,
Far unfit to bear the bitter cold?
I can scarcely move, or draw my breath;
Let me, let me freeze again to death.

Cupid. Thou doting fool, forbear, forbear;
What, dost thou dream of freezing here?
At Love's appearing, all the sky clearing,
The stormy winds their fury spare:
Winter subduing, and spring renewing,
My beams create a more glorious year.
Thou doting fool, forbear, forbear,
What, dost thou dream of freezing here?

Genius. Great Love, I know thee now;
Eldest of the gods art thou:
Heaven and earth by thee were made;
Human nature
Is thy creature,
Every where thou art obey'd.

Cupid. No part of my dominion shall be waste;
To spread my sway, and sing my praise,
Even here I will a people raise,
Of kind embracing lovers, and embrac'd.

[*Cupid waves his wand, upon which the scene opens, and discovers a prospect of ice and snow to the end of the stage.*

Singers and dancers, men and women, appear.

Man. See, see, we assemble,
Thy revels to hold;
Though quivering with cold,
We chatter and tremble.

Cupid. 'Tis I, 'tis I, 'tis I, that have warm'd ye;
In spite of cold weather,
I've brought you together;
'Tis I, 'tis I, 'tis I, that have arm'd ye.

Chorus. 'Tis Love, 'tis Love, 'tis Love, that has warm'd us;
In spite of cold weather
He brought us together:
'Tis Love, 'tis Love, 'tis Love that has arm'd us.

Cupid. Sound a parley, ye fair, and surrender!
Set yourselves and your lovers at ease;
He's a grateful offender
Who pleasure dare seize;
But the whining pretender
Is sure to displease.

II.

Since the fruit of desire is possessing,
'Tis unmanly to sigh and complain;
When we kneel for redressing
We move your disdain:
Love was made for a blessing,
And not for a pain.

A dance; after which the singers and dancers depart.

Emmeline. I could be pleas'd with any one but thee,
Who entertain'd my sight with such gay shows,
As men and women moving here and there,
That, coursing one another in their steps,
Have made their feet a tune."

Cupid's invocation, "What, ho! thou genius of this isle," is called a recitative, though it is more properly an *aria parlante*. The boundaries between recitative and air were not exactly defined in Purcell's time. His recitatives often have the protracted tones, the rhythmical movement, the divisions, embellishments, and regular closes, which are now considered as belonging entirely to the *air*. A few bars of symphony form a picturesque introduction to the appearance of the genius; there is something freezing in the sounds he utters, as, with a low and trembling voice, he rises, "unwillingly and slow,"

through an octave of semitones; and equally expressive is the descending octave with which he murmurs, "Let me freeze again to death," as if unable longer to suffer the pain of utterance. The influence of love, in gradually warming his breast, is finely expressed; and the chorus of the inhabitants of the regions of frost, "'Tis love that has warmed us," is full of life and spirit. The construction of this effective chorus is simple in the extreme; but it is that simplicity of which the highest genius only is capable.

We now come to the romantic scene of Arthur's temptations and dangers in the enchanted grove. It is borrowed from the *Jerusalem Delivered*—the same source from which Wieland derived the similar scene in *Oberon*, which has been introduced in the opera composed by Weber. Arthur, before entering the scene of his trials, has been warned that he has many perils to encounter; but those he meets with are not such as he has prepared himself for.

"*Arthur* (*walking.*) No danger yet: I see no walls of fire,
No city of the fiends, with forms obscene,
To grin from far on flaming battlements.
This is indeed the grove I should destroy;
But where's the horror? sure the prophet err'd.—
Hark! music, and the warbling notes of birds!

[*Soft music.*

Hell entertains me like some welcome guest.
More wonders yet! yet all delightful too:
A silver current to forbid my passage,
And yet, to invite me, stands a golden bridge:

Perhaps a trap for my unwary feet,
To sink and whelm me underneath the waves,
With fire or water let him wage his war,
Or all the elements at once, I'll on.

[*As he is going to the bridge, two Syrens arise from the water. They show themselves to the waist and sing.*

1*st Syren.* O pass not on, but stay,
And waste the joyous day
With us in gentle play;
Unbend to love, unbend thee:
O lay thy sword aside,
And other arms provide;
For other wars attend thee,
And sweeter to be tried.

Chorus. For other wars, &c.

Both sing. Two daughters of this aged stream are we;
And both our sea-green locks have comb'd for thee:
Come bathe with us an hour or two,
Come naked in, for we are so;
What danger from a naked foe?
Come bathe with us, come bathe, and share
What pleasures in the floods appear.
We'll beat the waters till they bound,
And circle round, around, around,
And circle round, around.

Arthur. A lazy pleasure trickles through my veins!
Here could I stay, and well be cozen'd here.
But honour calls;—is honour in such haste?
Can it not bait at such a pleasing inn?
No, for the more I look, the more I long.
Farewell, ye fair illusions! I must leave ye,
While I have power to say that I must leave ye.
Farewell! with half my soul I stagger off.
How dear this flying victory has cost,
When, if I stay to struggle, I am lost!

[*As he is going forward, Nymphs and Sylvans come out from behind the trees. A bass and two trebles sing the following song to a minuet.*

Dance with a song, all with branches in their hands.

Song. How happy the lover,
How easy his chain,
How pleasing his pain,
How sweet to discover
He sighs not in vain.
For love every creature
Is form'd by his nature;
No joys are above
The pleasures of love.

The dance continues, with the same measure played alone.

II.

In vain are our graces,
In vain are your eyes,
If love you despise;
When age furrows faces
'Tis time to be wise.
Then use the short blessing,
That flies in possessing:
No joys are above
The pleasures of love.

Arthur. And what are the fantastic fairy joys
To love like mine? false joys, false welcomes all.
Begone, ye sylvan trippers of the green;
Fly after night, and overtake the moon.
[*The dancers, singers, and Syrens vanish.*"

The duet in this scene, "Two daughters of an aged stream are we," is one of the very happiest efforts of Purcell's genius. In imagining it, he at once leaped over the space of a century and a half, and anticipated all the grace, refinement, and expression, which a long line of his successors, down to the present day, have been able to bestow upon melody. This song of the Syrens is indeed

enchanting; and realises any idea that can be formed of such bewitching accents as might shake the constancy of a hero. Not only, too, is it fascinating to every one who is capable of being moved by sweet sounds, but it is full of exquisite beauties as a work of art. How beautifully chosen are the gliding intervals in which the invitation, "Come, come," is breathed out, and reiterated so gently! and how persuasive the diminished fifth with which the highest voice urges the remonstrance, "*What danger* from a naked foe!" If we look to the combination of the two parts, we find ingenious contrivances, which, though charming to the ear, give no idea whatever of art or labour. The passage, "We'll beat the waters till they bound," appears to the listener highly descriptive; but it is, moreover, a canon in the unison very curiously interwoven, till it breaks into a free imitation between the parts, and the fine undulating strain which continues to the end. This charming duet wants nothing but the rich orchestral colouring of Mozart; which Purcell would assuredly have given to it, had he possessed the means which the progress of instrumental music placed in the hands of the modern composer.

The drama concludes with a masque, or pageant, represented by Pan, Nereids, Venus, Æolus, and other mythological personages, and consisting of songs and dances, for the purpose of exhibiting to King Authur the future prosperity and greatness

of his country. The following song, sung by Venus, is a good specimen of Dryden's smooth lyrical measures. It is united to one of Purcell's sweetest melodies.

" Fairest isle, all isles excelling,
Seat of pleasures and of loves;
Venus here will choose her dwelling,
And forsake her Cyprian groves.

Cupid, from his favourite nation,
Care and envy will remove;
Jealousy, that poisons passion,
And despair, that dies for love.

Gentle murmurs, sweet complaining,
Sighs, that blow the fire of love;
Soft repulses, kind disdaining,
Shall be all the pains you prove;

Every swain shall pay his duty,
Grateful every nymph shall prove;
And as these excel in beauty,
Those shall be renown'd for love."

King Arthur has been adapted to the modern stage, under the title of *Arthur and Emmeline*. In this shape it has frequently been performed at different times, and was last revived at the English opera-house, with great success, in 1827. The increasing taste for Purcell's music will probably bring about the permanent revival of this elegant and pleasing drama.

The Indian Queen was written partly by Sir Robert Howard, Dryden's brother-in-law, and partly by Dryden himself. It is in rhyme, accord-

ing to the fashion of the day ; and the versification, as well as the characters, bear evident marks of Dryden's hand. The plot is extravagant enough ; arising not only out of a war between Mexico and Peru, for which history affords no warrant, but a contest between the lawful sovereign of Mexico and an usurper. Montezuma, the Peruvian general, who, after having nearly completed the conquest of Mexico, demands, as a reward, the hand of the Inca's daughter, and, because he is refused, transfers his own prowess, and, consequently, victory, to the Mexican side, has a resemblance to the more celebrated and strongly-drawn Almanzor ; and Zempoalla, the usurping Mexican queen, has a great deal of the indomitable pride which Dryden often makes an attribute of his female characters.

This play was acted in 1664, and received with great applause. In its original form there is very little music ; and we are not informed by whom it was composed. There is an instrumental symphony, introducing the prologue ; a song, or chorus, sung by aërial spirits, in the incantation scene in the third act ; and a short song, or chorus, in the scene of the sacrifice which opens the fifth act. The passages in the incantation scene which are set to music by Purcell, seem to have been at first merely spoken ; and the additional lyrical poetry was probably introduced for the purpose of being set by Purcell after Dryden became aware of his unrivalled genius.

In the scene of the Mexican sacrifice, the chorus of priests is a grand composition. The movement in F minor, "All dismal sounds thus on these offerings wait," is a most masterly piece of counterpoint, equally remarkable for the simplicity of its effect, and the deep gloom of its expression. In the incantation scene, where the magician Ismeron invokes the infernal powers to reveal to Zempoalla her future destiny, Ismeron's recitative and air, "Ye twice ten hundred deities," is a striking instance of the power of musical sounds to illustrate poetical conceptions. After the dismal objects by which the God of Dreams is conjured to arise from his sleeping mansion, and open his unwilling eyes, how exquisitely smooth and tranquil is the strain that follows !—

> "While bubbling springs their music keep,
> That use to lull thee in thy sleep."

The appearance of the God of Dreams is heralded by a sweet symphony for oboes ; and the air which he sings has a free and flowing oboe accompaniment. Indeed the whole instrumental parts in the music of this play show an astonishing command of the limited resources which the composer had at his disposal, and enable us to imagine the uses he would have made of a complete and various orchestra. This play, too, contains the ballad, "I attempt from Love's sickness to fly in vain," one of the most beautiful pieces of tender and expressive

melody that ever flowed from the mind of a musician. Of this song, Dr. Burney says, that "though it has been many years dead, it would soon be recalled into existence and fashion by the voice of some favourite singer, who should think it worth animation." This has been done in our day, by Mr. Hobbs, who has made the song his own by his exquisite manner of singing it.

Dryden's *Tyrannic Love* was first acted in 1668, and printed in 1670. We are not informed who was the author of the music originally performed: but other music was afterwards composed by Purcell.

This play is in many respects very characteristic of its author. It contains a great deal of tumid language and exaggerated sentiment, mixed with much grandeur and elevation of thought. The character of St. Catherine is too perfect, and too much raised above humanity, to excite interest. We cannot feel emotions of terror or pity, from anything that can happen to a person who knows that she is under the immediate protection of heaven, is in communication with beings of a higher world, and is indifferent about everything that can befal her in this.

The introduction of magic, and of the astral spirits, who have little to do with the story of the piece, was probably contrived for the sake of music and scenery. Dryden, in his preface, thus justifies his use of this machinery. "As for what I have

said of astral or aërial spirits, it is no invention of mine, but taken from those who have written on that subject. Whether there are such beings or not, it concerns not me. It is sufficient for my purpose that many have believed the affirmative; and that these heroic representations, which are of the same nature with the epic, are not limited, but with the extremest bounds of what is credible."

The duet "Hark, my Damilcar,"* which has been rendered famous by Purcell's music, is sung by two spirits, Nakar and Damilcar, who have been evoked by the magician Nigrinus, to aid the designs of the emperor against the honour of the christian saint. Of these spirits the enchanter gives the following imaginative description.

> "An earthly fiend by compact me obeys;
> But him to light intents I must not raise.
> Some astral forms I must invoke by prayer,
> Framed all of purest atoms of the air;
> Not in their natures simply good or ill,
> But most subservient to bad spirits' will.
> Nakar of these does lead the mighty band,
> For eighty legions move at his command;
> Gentle to all, but, far above the rest,
> Mild Nakar loves his soft Damilcar best.
> In airy chariots they together ride,
> And sip the dew as through the clouds they glide:
> These are the spirits which in love have power."

* In the copies of the music, this name is always turned into Daridcar.

Nigrinus uses incantations, which are pretty closely imitated from *Macbeth*. Nakar and Damilcar descend in clouds, and sing.

" *Nakar.* Hark, my Damilcar, we are called below !
Damilcar. Let us go, let us go!
Go to relieve the care
Of longing lovers in despair !
Nakar. Merry, merry, merry, we sail from the east,
Half tippled at a rainbow feast.
Dam. In the bright moonshine while winds whistle loud,
Tivy, tivy, tivy, we mount and we fly,
All rocking along in a downy white cloud :
And lest our leap from the sky should prove too far,
We slide on the back of a new-falling star.
Nakar. And drop from above
In a jelly of love !
Dam. But now the sun's down, and the elements red,
The spirits of fire against us make head !
Nakar. They muster, they muster, like gnats in the air ;
Alas ! I must leave thee, my fair ;
And to my light-horsemen repair.
Dam. O stay, for you need not to fear them to-night :
The wind is for us, and blows full in their sight :
And o'er the wide ocean we fight !
Like leaves in the autumn our foes will fall down,
And hiss in the water,
Both. And hiss in the water, and drown!
Dam. Now mortals that spy
How we tilt in the sky,
With wonder will gaze,
And fear such events as will ne'er come to pass.
Nakar. Stay you to perform what the men will have done.
Dam. Then call me again when the battle is won.
Both. So ready and quick is a spirit of air
To pity the lover, and succour the fair,
That, silent and swift, the little soft god

Is here with a wish, and is gone with a nod.
[*The clouds part; Nakar flies up, and Damilcar down.*"

This extravagant rhapsody is abundantly open to ridicule, and did not escape the lash of Buckingham, who has given the following whimsical parody of it in the *Rehearsal*.

"*The two right kings of Brentford descend in the clouds, singing, in white garments; and three fiddlers sitting before them, in green.*

Bayes. Now, because the two right kings descend from above, I make 'em sing to the tune and style of our modern spirits.

1*st King.* Haste, brother king, we are sent from above.
2*nd King.* Let us move, let us move;
Move to remove the fate
Of Brentford's long united state.
1*st King.* Tarra, tan tara, full east and by south.
2*nd King.* We sail with thunder in our mouth,
In scorching noon-day, whilst the traveller stays,
Busy, busy, busy, we bustle along
Mounted upon warm Phœbus his rays,
Through the heavenly throng
Hasting to those
Who will feed us at night with a pig's petty-toes.
1*st King.* And we'll fall with our pate
In an *olio* of hate.
2*nd King.* But now supper's done, the servitors try,
Like soldiers, to storm a whole half-moon pie.
1*st King.* They gather, they gather hot custard in spoons,
But, alas, I must leave these half-moons,
And repair to my trusty dragoons.
2*nd King.* O stay, for you need not as yet go astray;
The tide, like a friend, has brought ships in our way,
And on their high ropes we will play:

Like maggots in filberts, we'll snug in our shell,
We'll frisk in our shell,
We'll firk in our shell,
And farewell.

1*st King.* But the ladies have all inclination to dance,
And the green frogs croak out a coranto of France.

Bayes. Is not that pretty, now? The fiddlers are all in green.

Smith. Ay, but they play no coranto.

Johnson. No, but they play a tune that's a great deal better.

Bayes. No coranto, quotha! That's a good one, with all my heart. Come, sing on.

2*nd King.* Now mortals that hear
How we tilt and career,
With wonder will fear
The event of such things as shall never appear.

1*st King.* Stay you to fulfil what the gods have decreed.

2*nd King.* Then call me to help you, if there shall be need.

1*st King.* So firmly resolv'd is a true Brentford king
To save the distressed, and help to 'em bring,
That ere a full pot of good ale you can swallow,
He's here with a whoop, and gone with a hollow.

[*Bayes fillips his finger, and sings after them.*

Bayes. He's here with a whoop, and gone with a hollow. This, sir, you must know, I thought once to have brought in with a conjuror.

Johnson. Ay, that would have been better.

Bayes. No, faith, not when you consider it: for thus 'tis more compendious, and does the thing every whit as well.

Smith. Thing! what thing?

Bayes. Why, bring them down again into the throne, sir; what would you have?

Smith. Well, but methinks the sense of this song is not very plain.

Bayes. Plain? why, did you ever hear any people in clouds speak plain? They must be all for flight of fancy, at its full range, without the least check or control upon it. When once you tie up spirits and people in clouds to speak plain, you spoil all.

Smith. (*aside.*) Bless me, what a monster's this!
[*The two kings light out of the clouds, and step into the throne.*
1*st King.* Come, now to serious counsel we'll advance.
2*nd King.* I do agree, but first let's have a dance."

Purcell, however, in the above duet, has redeemed the absurdity of Dryden's verses by the beauty of his own music. It is airy, animated, and tender; and has so much meaning in itself, that the listener forgets that the words are mere nonsense.

There is another pretty song in this piece. St. Catherine is discovered asleep on a couch, while images of love and pleasure are exhibited to her, in a dream, by the enchanter's spirits. The song is, "Ah, how sweet it is to love!" sung by Damilcar. Its expression is soft and voluptuous; though it is injured by an unmeaning reiteration of the word "all" half a dozen times, and a stiff division at the close.

It was for this play Dryden wrote the epilogue so celebrated for its whimsical beginning. It was spoken by Nell Gwynn, who, being left as dead on the stage, and about to be carried off, started up, exclaiming,

"Hold, are you mad? you damn'd confounded dog!
I am to rise and speak the epilogue."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Prophetess—Bonduca—Don Quixote—Purcell's songs in various plays—His death and character—Principal dramatic singers in his time—Dryden's *Secular Masque*—Eccles—Jeremy Collier's attack on the stage.

The *Prophetess, or the History of Dioclesian*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, was revived, with alterations and additions, "after the manner of an opera," by Betterton, and performed in 1690, with music by Purcell. The music was published by Purcell in 1691, with a dedication to the Duke of Somerset, in which he says, "Music is yet but in its nonage, a forward child, which gives hope of what it may be hereafter in England, when the masters of it shall find more encouragement. 'Tis now learning Italian, which is its best master, and studying a little of the French air, to give it somewhat more of gaiety and fashion."

Dioclesian, as a drama, does not hold a high place among the works of its authors; and Betterton's additions, "after the manner of an opera," are little better than doggrel. The music, though

it has many and great beauties, seems more unequal than that of any of Purcell's dramatic pieces which have been already mentioned. The air of the ballad, "What shall I do to show how much I love her?" is charming, and well known from its union with the song, "Virgins are like the fair flower," in the *Beggar's Opera*. The duet, "Tell me why, my charming fair," contains many fine and characteristic ideas; but it is diffuse, and rambles through too many keys, and the melody is deformed by stiff and antiquated graces. The same observations are applicable to the duet, "Oh the sweet delights of love," and the air "When first I saw the bright Aurelia's eyes." The song, "Since the toils and hazards of war's at an end," (such is the poet's grammar,) is embellished with a showy accompaniment for two flutes, and would be excellent, but for the long formal divisions through which a single syllable is frequently dragged for several bars together. In truth (and it is a rare thing in Purcell's music) the air and words are not at all suited to each other even in their general expression; the words being meant to be joyous, while the melody, let it be sung ever so briskly, is essentially sad. "Make room for the great god of wine," is a bacchanalian glee, which has served as a model for many such compositions in later times. "Sound, Fame, thy brazen trumpet," is a spirited trumpet-song; but

its style has become antiquated. "Let the soldiers rejoice," is an animated and martial song and chorus.

Dioclesian was again revived at Covent Garden about the middle of the last century, but does not seem to have been performed since that time; and it is not probable that it will be again brought on the stage.

Among the last of Purcell's works was the music in *Bonduca*, another tragedy of Beaumont and Fletcher's, made into an opera by Betterton, in the same manner as *Dioclesian*. Neither the one nor the other of these pieces seems particularly calculated for being turned into a musical drama; and, in the one as well as the other, the music is introduced merely as belonging to shows or pageants, without being at all interwoven with the texture of the piece. *Bonduca* has some powerful and pathetic scenes, but not much general merit; and it is quite unfit for the modern stage. The subject, however, seems to have roused Purcell's patriotic feelings; for none of his compositions breathe a nobler or loftier spirit.

The chorus, "Hear us, great Rugwith, hear our prayers," sung by the British priests before the battle with the Romans, is a supplication full of the most sublime pathos. What grandeur there is in the few notes sung by a single voice—

> "Descend in chariots of ethereal flame,
> And touch the altars you defend!"

and how earnest and imploring the accents in which the whole choir join in the prayer,

> " O save us!
> O save our nation and our name!"

The instrumental symphony which introduces this chorus is a fine piece of solemn harmony, the effect of which could derive no addition from any modern improvements.

The solo for a bass voice, " Hear, ye gods of Britain!" which is called an air, is a mixture of recitative and *aria parlante* or declamatory air. It is a model of the perfect adaptation of sound to sense. The notes not only aid the clear elocution of the words, but heighten their emphasis and expression. The accompaniments for the stringed instruments are beautifully wrought, and contain some harmony which in Purcell's time must have been quite new, and is still singularly bold and powerful.

The air for a treble voice, " O lead me to some peaceful gloom," has all the freedom and grace of the finest modern melody, and is beautifully in accordance with the sentiment of the words. In one place, however, the author has been led astray by a word which has often proved an *ignis fatuus* to composers. In the passage,

> " Where the shrill trumpets never sound,
> But one eternal hush goes round,"

the singer breaks out into a loud and dashing pas-

sage, in imitation of the sound of a trumpet; although the whole song is an aspiration after peace, repose, and silence. Even where the trumpet is introduced, it is *negatively*, in expressing a wish for some peaceful gloom, where its sound may never be heard.* The "eternal hush," in the succeeding line, is exquisitely expressed.

The chorus; "To arms, to arms! your ensigns straight display," is one of the most inspiring martial strains that ever was heard. The concluding duet and chorus, "Britons, strike home," has long taken its place among the warlike national songs of England.

The music in *Bonduca* was composed in 1695, the last year of Purcell's life; and the piece was brought out in the following year, after his death.

Durfey's three parts of *Don Quixote*, which are three consecutive plays, were brought out, the first in 1694, and the last in 1696.† For these plays

* A whimsical proof of the prevalence of this error was given in the setting of Sir Walter Scott's famous song of "County Guy." Many composers essayed it; and most of them, when they came to the words,

> "The lark, his lay that trill'd all day,
> Sits hush'd, his partner by,"

set about imitating the trill of a lark, either by the voice or the accompaniment; forgetting that the lay of the lark (like the trumpet in Purcell's song) is mentioned *negatively*, and for the purpose of intimating that it is *hushed*.

† Thomas (familiarly called Tom) D'Urfey was a native of

Purcell produced the finest of all his dramatic compositions, the two songs, " Let the dreadful engines," and " From rosy bowers."

Devonshire, and bred to the profession of the law, which a love of idleness and pleasure led him to abandon. He took to writing for the stage, and produced a considerable number of plays and operas, several of which were very popular. He produced also a great many songs, and other fugitive pieces, which are contained in the well-known collection published by him in the year 1719, under the title of *Wit* and *Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy.*

D'Urfey was a man of gay and convivial, if not dissolute habits. He was very popular among the licentious London society of Charles the Second's time, and a great favourite of that monarch himself. That his character, however, was not depraved, appears from the great kindness with which he is mentioned by some of the most respectable writers of his time, especially Addison, who gives a very pleasing description of him in the sixty-seventh number of the *Guardian.* Addison there tells his female readers that his old friend and contemporary had often made their grandmothers merry, and that his sonnets had perhaps lulled asleep many a toast among the ladies then living, when she lay in her cradle. The paper, which was written for the purpose of recommending a play to be performed for D'Urfey's benefit, concludes with this character of him:

" As my friend, after the manner of the old Lyrics, accompanies his works with his own voice, he has been the delight of the most polite companies and conversations from the beginning of King Charles the Second's reign to the present time. Many an honest gentleman has got a reputation in his country by pretending to have been in company with Tom D'Urfey.

" I might here mention several other merits in my friend, as his enriching our language with a multitude of rhymes, and bringing words together that, without his good offices, would

"Let the dreadful engines," is a soliloquy of Cardenio, while he is wandering among the wilds of the Sierra Morena. It is a wonderful picture of every variety of human passion—love, hatred, tender melancholy, fury, and despair—raging with unrestrained violence, as in rapid succession they chase each other through the mind of a maniac. Except some other works of Purcell himself, there is nothing in music like it, or comparable to it. In the play it forms an entire scene. Cardenio rushes distractedly upon the stage, and, after giving vent in this monologue to his frenzy, disappears among

never have been aequainted with one another so long as it had been a tongue. But I must not omit that my old friend angles for a trout the best of any man in England. May-flies come in late this season, or I myself should before now have had a trout of his hooking.

"After what I have said, and mueh more that I might say on this subjeet, I question not but the world will think that my old friend ought not to pass the remainder of his life in a cage like a singing-bird, but enjoy all that Pindarick liberty whieh is suitable to a man of his genius. He has made the world merry, and I hope they will make him easy so long as he stays among us. This I will take upon me to say, they eannot do a kindness to a more diverting eompanion, or a more cheerful, honest, and good-natured man."

From this and other passages it appears that D'Urfey, as is generally the case with persons of his disposition and habits, was in neeessitous eireumstanees in his old age. He died ten years afterwards, in 1723. There is a great deal of wit and humour in his plays and poems; but his writings are polluted by grossness and indeeency.

the rocks and thickets of his haunt. Delivered by a performer (if there was any such) capable of conceiving and expressed it, this scene must have been appalling, heart-rending, overpowering to a degree beyond anything which our experience of dramatic music has led us even to imagine. It is to be lamented that this astonishing composition can never again be heard in this manner, as the play for which it was written has long disappeared for ever from the stage: and every one has felt how much the music of the theatre is chilled and enfeebled by being transferred to the concert-room. But it is there that we must now be content to hear it, and many other of Purcell's dramatic compositions: and, even under this disadvantage, they are calculated to afford more delight than any other music of which the English school can boast.

"From rosy bowers" was the song of the swan. "It was," says the *Orpheus Britannicus*, "the last song the author set, being in his sickness." It is the passionate raving of a girl crazed with love, and thus forms the counterpart to the song of Cardenio. It wants the fierce and terrible features of that song, but is equally fantastical, and has a charming feminine air throughout, even in its wildest flights and most violent bursts of passion. This song, unlike that of Cardenio, is not injured by its separation from the play for which it was composed. It belongs to the character of Altisidora,

and is sung by that witty damsel while she is persecuting the Knight of the Rueful Countenance with her pretended passion : but it is by far too beautiful and too pathetic for such a purpose. It is evident that Purcell was quite in earnest in composing it; so should the performer be in singing it, and the auditor in listening to it. It would be quite shocking to hear this exquisite effusion of feeling given as a joke, like the crying song in *Love in a Village*, with which Rosetta mystifies her gouty lover, Justice Woodcock, whimpering to him, but all the while laughing behind her fan. It was a favourite song of several great English vocalists of past times, and will unquestionably be so again, though none of our present singers seem to have sufficient strength or courage to attempt it.*

Purcell also composed vocal pieces for *The Fairy Queen*, a play altered from *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, and performed in 1692; *Timon of Athens*, altered from Shakspeare by Shadwell; *The Libertine* and *Epsom Wells*, by that dramatist; Dryden's *Aurungzebe ;* and a masque in the tragedy of *Œdipus*. The well-known mad song, "I'll sail upon the dog-star," was sung in a play called *The Fool's Preferment*. Many of these, as well as his occasional or miscellaneous songs, duets, &c., are contained in the *Orpheus Britannicus*.

This illustrious musician died on the 21st of November, 1695, in the thirty-seventh year of his

* It has lately been finely sung by Miss Masson.

age. It is said that his death was caused by a cold, occasioned by his having been kept standing one night at his own door for a considerable time, in consequence of his wife's irritation at his having stayed too late at a convivial party. This story has been told and repeated again and again, accompanied with many harsh comments on the character and conduct of Mrs. Purcell. It has been told, however, without evidence, and in the face of circumstances which render it incredible. Though he possessed many good and amiable qualities, Purcell's domestic character cannot be rated high. He was too much addicted to the society of mean and dissolute companions; and the irregularity of his habits must, to his wife, have been a source of grief, anxiety, and well-grounded displeasure. That she was destitute of affection for him, however, and treated him with such harshness as to cause his death in the manner that has been mentioned, is entirely inconsistent with the language of grief and tenderness which she made use of in her dedication of the posthumous collection of his works; expressions which, if hypocritical, she durst hardly have ventured to use at a time when her habits of life with her husband must have been so well known to many. Purcell's death, moreover, appears to have been the consequence of illness of some duration. One of his finest songs was composed "during his sickness;" and in his will, dated three weeks before his death, he de-

scribes himself as "of sound mind, though *very ill in constitution;*" a phrase which induces the belief that he died of a gradual decay. By this will, too, he leaves all his effects to his loving wife Frances, and appoints her his sole executrix. Would he have bestowed this mark of love and confidence on a woman whose unkind usage had brought him to the brink of the grave? It is time, therefore, that there should be an end to these idle and unwarrantable attacks on the memory of poor Mrs. Purcell.

Though, unhappily, fond of society unworthy of his character and genius, he was not exclusively given to such society. He enjoyed the esteem and friendship of many persons distinguished both by rank and talents. Pepys, in his Diary, speaks of meeting him in the fashionable circles of the day. The Lord Keeper North, an eminent patron of literature and the arts, was among his friends; and Dryden appears to have regarded him with warm affection.

Purcell left several children, one of whom, Edward, became an organist of small reputation, and died in 1751; of the others there is no account. Daniel Purcell, his brother, was a musician of respectable abilities. He composed many songs for the dramatic pieces of the day; all of which, however, are now forgotten.

Purcell was buried in Westminster Abbey. His monument was erected by Lady Elizabeth Howard,

Dryden's wife; and the epitaph inscribed on it was written by the poet himself.

"Here lies
HENRY PURCELL, ESQUIRE;
Who left this life
And is gone to that blessed place
Where only his own harmony can be exceeded.
Obiit 21mo die Novembris,
Anno ætatis suæ 37mo,
Annoque Domini 1695."

Though Purcell's genius ranged through every walk of his art, yet its bent was towards the music of the theatre; and he has left behind him a large body of dramatic compositions, which to this hour remain unrivalled among the works of the English school. In variety of character, beauty of melody, truth and force of expression, and nice adaptation to the genius of the English language, they are to this hour unparalleled. Their imperfections must be ascribed to the state of music, as a practical art, in his day; and when this is considered, it is wonderful that these imperfections are so small and so few. In regard to composition, it must be remembered that English secular melody was almost created by Purcell; the greatness of his predecessors having been derived, with slight exceptions, from their achievements in vocal harmony. It was not then in England as it was in Italy, where the melody of the stage had been polished by a succession of distinguished masters. It was still worse in regard to performance: for,

though Purcell could, and did, obtain ideas of the Italian melody by reading the scores of the Italian composers, yet he could obtain no conception of the delicacies and graces of Italian singing. His principal vocalists, probably, had as fine voices, and as much native feeling, as any of their successors: but the powers of the voice were not then developed by cultivation; nor was expression heightened and varied by the thousand refinements of modern execution. Of all the qualities of an artist, the taste is that which is most slowly matured; and it is to immaturity of taste, therefore, that Purcell's defects are to be wholly ascribed. Still, we repeat, it is wonderful to observe how free his works are from defects even of taste. His innate sense of the beautiful gave rise to conceptions, which, to himself, were never realised. What would have been his feelings, had he heard "Bess of Bedlam," "From rosy bowers," or, "Let the dreadful engines," sung by Madame Mara, Mrs. Sheridan, Bartleman, or Braham!

But the highest quality of Purcell's music is its genuine English character. In this respect it remains wholly unrivalled. Purcell was fully aware of the great principle, that the vocal music of every country must be founded upon the peculiar accent, or modulation, of its spoken language. Addison, (who, though not a musician, was well acquainted with those fundamental laws of taste and criticism which are applicable to all the fine

arts,) has so clearly explained this principle, and so elegantly and happily illustrated it, that his remarks deserve the attention of every musical artist. Their value has suffered no abatement by the lapse of a century.*

"The only fault," says Addison, "I can find in our present practice, is the making use of the Italian *recitativo* with English words.

"To go to the bottom of this matter, I must observe, that the tone, or (as the French call it) the accent of every nation in their ordinary speech, is altogether different from that of every other people; as we may see even in the Welsh and Scotch who border so near upon us. By the tone or accent, I do not mean the pronunciation of each particular word, but the sound of the whole sentence. Thus it is very common for an English gentleman, when he hears a French tragedy, to complain that the actors all of them speak in a tone; and therefore he very wisely prefers his own countrymen, not considering that a foreigner complains of the same tone in an English actor.

"For this reason, the recitative music, in every language, should be as different as the tone or accent of each language; for otherwise, what may properly express a passion in one language will not do it in another. Every one who has been long in Italy knows very well, that the cadences in the recitative bear a remote affinity to the tone of

* Spectator, No. 29. April 3, 1711.

their voices in ordinary conversation; or, to speak more properly, are only the accents of their language made more musical and tuneful. Thus the notes of interrogation, or admiration, in the Italian music (if one may so call them) which resemble their accents in discourse on such occasions, are not unlike the ordinary tones of an English voice when we are angry: insomuch, that I have often seen our audiences extremely mistaken as to what has been doing upon the stage, and expecting to see the hero knock down a messenger when he has been asking him a question; or fancying that he quarrels with his friend when he only bids him good-morrow.

"For this reason, the Italian artists cannot agree with our English musicians, in admiring Purcell's compositions, and thinking his tunes so wonderfully adapted to his words; because both nations do not always express the same passions by the same sounds.

"I am therefore humbly of opinion, that an English composer should not follow the Italian recitative too servilely, but make use of many gentle deviations from it, in compliance with his own native language. He may copy out of it all the lulling softness and *dying* falls, (as Shakspeare calls them,) but should still remember that he ought to accommodate himself to an English audience; and, by humouring the tone of our voices in ordinary conversation, have the same regard to the accent

of his own language as those persons had to theirs whom he professes to imitate. It is observed that several of the singing-birds of our own country learn to sweeten their voices and mellow the harshness of their natural notes, by practising under those that come from warmer climates. In the same manner I would allow the Italian opera to lend our English music as much as may grace and soften it, but never entirely to annihilate and destroy it. Let the infusion be as strong as you please, but still let the subject-matter of it be English.*

"A composer should fit his music to the genius of the people, and consider that the delicacy of hearing, and taste of harmony, have been formed upon those sounds which every country abounds with: in short, that music is of a relative nature, and what is harmony to one ear may be dissonance to another.

"The same observations which I have made upon the recitative part of music, may be applied to all our songs and airs in general."

These important considerations are, in a great measure, disregarded by English composers. English recitative, instead of being founded on what may be called the natural melody of English speech, is generally made up of a tissue of musical phrases borrowed from the Italian composers; so that an English singer, delivering a piece of recitative in his own language, has the appearance of a

* Addison's musical language is not technically accurate, but this does not affect his principles.

foreigner declaiming in broken English. The same thing, though in a lesser degree, is perceptible in our English airs; which, being made up of passages originally suggested by the modulations of Italian speech, are destructive of the emphasis and accent of the words to which they are united by the English composer. Similar effects are produced by the present imitation of the German music. Our composers act precisely as a painter would do, who, in painting an English landscape, instead of looking upon the scenery around him, should compose his picture by copying his rocks from Salvator Rosa, his blue distances from Poussin, his sunshine from Claude, his trees from Ruysdael, and his cattle from Cuyp. The evil has been aggravated of late years by the practice of adapting Italian, German, and French operas to the English stage; a practice which has almost put an end to the existence of English melody. Even when setting an English ballad, our composers show that their heads are full of Rossini, Spohr, Weber, or Auber. Compare their exotic productions with the genuine English strains of Purcell, Arne, Linley, Arnold, Dibdin, and Shield; and the difference is at once perceived between copying from art and copying from nature. But let us not be misunderstood. A knowledge of art, and a study of its most exquisite productions, are necessary to enable the artist to bestow grace and refinement on his copies from nature. Purcell, the most natural

and the most truly English of all our composers, sought for models among the French and Italian masters of his time. He himself has said, that "he has faithfully endeavoured a just imitation of the most far-famed Italian masters: but this imitation (as the present writer has elsewhere observed) "did not consist in stringing together fragments of Italian melody, and trying to force these into an union with English words. He studied the genius of the Italian music; observed that its excellencies consisted in its smoothness and expression, and in the exquisite adaptation of the melody to what may be called the accent and modulation of the Italian language; and he endeavoured to give to his own music corresponding qualities. It thus arises, that Purcell's music, while it does possess the excellencies of the Italian music which he studied, is perfectly original, and much more truly and essentially English than that of any composer who has appeared before or since."*—"Though Purcell's dramatic style and recitative," says Burney," were formed, in a great measure, on French models, there is a latent power and force in his expression of English words, whatever be the subject, that will make an unprejudiced native of this island feel, more than all the elegance, grace, and refinement of modern music, less happily applied, can do: and this pleasure is communicated to us, not by the symmetry or rhythm of modern melody, but

* *Musical History, Biography, and Criticism.*

by his having tuned to the true accents of our mother-tongue, those notes of passion which an inhabitant of this island would breathe in such situations as the words describe. And these indigenous expressions of passion Purcell had the power to enforce by the energy of modulation, which, on some occasions, was bold, affecting, and sublime."—"Handel," adds the same writer, "who flourished in a less barbarous age for his art, has been acknowledged Purcell's superior in many particulars; but in none more than the art and grandeur of his choruses, the harmony and texture of his organ fugues, as well as his great style of playing that instrument; the majesty of his grand concertos; the ingenuity of his accompaniments to his songs and choruses; and even in the general melody of the airs themselves: yet, in the accent, passion, and expression *of English words*, the vocal music of Purcell is, sometimes to my feelings, as superior to Handel's as an original poem to a translation."

Every English student of composition ought to "give his days and nights" to the music of Purcell: not for the purpose of learning to copy him, but of learning, from him, to copy nature.

The principal dramatic singers in Purcell's time were Mr. James Bowen, Mr. Harris, Mr. Freeman, Mr. Pate, and Mr. Mountfort, performers at the theatres; Mr. Damascene, Mr. Woodson, Mr. Turner, and Mr. Bouchier, gentlemen of the chapel-royal; Mrs. Mary Davis, Miss Shore, (afterwards

Mrs. Cibber,) Mrs. Cross, Miss Campion, Mrs. Butler, and Mrs. Bracegirdle.

None of the above male theatrical performers are much spoken of as singers; though they are described as excellent actors. The gentlemen of the chapel-royal, about this time, occasionally assisted in musical performances on the stage; but this practice was afterwards prohibited by Queen Anne.

Mrs. Davis was one of the actresses, belonging to Sir William Davenant's company, who boarded in his house. Downes says, that she played the part of Celania in a play called the Rivals; and in this part, which was that of a shepherdess mad for love, sang the well-known ballad, "My lodging is on the cold ground," so beautifully, that she captivated King Charles II., who took her off the stage, and had a daughter by her, who was named Mary Tudor, and was married to Francis Lord Ratcliffe, afterwards Earl of Derwentwater. Mrs. Davis was also admired as a dancer.

Miss Shore was daughter of Matthias Shore, serjeant trumpeter in the king's household. She was a beautiful and amiable young woman, and at an early age showed great musical talents, and became a favourite pupil of Purcell. Colley Cibber, having accidentally heard her perform on the harpsichord, fell in love with her, and married her, when he himself was only two-and-twenty, and she still younger. At that time, as Cibber tells us, he had no other in-

come than twenty pounds a year allowed him by his father, and twenty shillings a week from the theatre. The marriage having taken place without the consent of the lady's father, he refused to do anything for them: upon this Mrs. Cibber betook herself to the stage; and, after having distinguished herself as a singer, became an actress of the highest celebrity.

Miss Cross was an eminent actress, especially in musical parts. She performed the character of Altisidora in the third part of *Don Quixote*, in which she sang the song, "From rosy bowers."

Miss Campion was a young woman of low birth, but, unhappily for herself, possessed a beautiful person and a fine voice. William, the first Duke of Devonshire, then an old man, took her off the stage, and made her his mistress. She died in 1706, in her nineteenth year; and the duke buried her in the church of Latimers, in Buckinghamshire, the burial-place of his family. In the chancel of that church he erected a monument for her, on which there is a Latin inscription, importing, that she was wise beyond her years, and bountiful to the poor even beyond her abilities; and, at the theatre, where she had sometime acted, modest and untainted; that being seized with a hectic fever, she had submitted to her fate with a firm confidence and christian piety; and that William, Duke of Devonshire, had, upon her beloved remains, erected that tomb as sacred to her memory. This ostentatious proof of attachment to an object of illicit love

was properly looked upon as an insult to religion and good manners, and very generally censured.

Mrs. Butler is described by Cibber as an excellent actress and singer. In speaking, she had a sweet-toned voice, which, with her genteel air and sensible pronunciation, rendered her very interesting in many serious parts, though she excelled also in characters of humour. She gave great attraction, both by her acting and singing, to the part of Philidel, the good spirit, in *King Arthur*.

Mrs. Bracegirdle was the most favourite performer of her time. Cibber gives a captivating description of her, as she was in the year 1690. She was then, he says, just blooming to her maturity, her reputation as an actress gradually rising with the beauty of her person. There never was any woman in such general favour with the public; a favour which, to the very end of her theatrical life, she preserved by maintaining strict propriety of conduct. She was a brunette, with so lively an aspect, and such a glow of health and cheerfulness in her countenance, that she was surrounded by lovers and admirers.

Among these was a Captain Hill, a man of a profligate and brutal character, who had long persecuted her with addresses which she rejected with merited contempt. Hill ascribed this rejection, not to his own unworthiness, but to the lady's preference of some other person; and as Mountfort the actor was a handsome man, frequently performed with

her, and was on terms of friendly intercourse with her, Hill fixed on him, though a married man, as the object of his suspicion. Having obtained the assistance of Lord Mohun, a noted *roué* of that day, and hired some soldiers, he attempted to force Mrs. Bracegirdle into a coach, as she came out of a house where she had supped. But her mother and the gentleman of the house, having resisted and called for help, she was rescued and safely guarded home. Hill and Lord Mohun, thus disappointed of their prey, vowed vengeance, with dreadful imprecations, against Mountfort. Mrs. Bracegirdle's friends, hearing these threats, immediately sent to Mrs. Mountfort, advising her to warn her husband not to come home that night; but, unfortunately, Mrs. Mountford's messengers were unable to find him. In the meantime, Lord Mohun and Captain Hill paraded the street with their swords drawn till about midnight, when they met Mountfort on his return home. Lord Mohun saluted him in a friendly manner, and while they were in conversation, Hill, coming behind Mountfort, gave him a violent blow on the head with his left hand, and before Montfort had time to draw and stand on his defence, ran him through the body with his sword. This last circumstance Mountfort declared, as a dying man, to the surgeon who attended him. He died on the following day. Hill immediately made his escape; but Lord Mohun was seized. He was brought to trial on the 31st January, 1693, when he was

acquitted, strangely enough, on the ground that he had not directly assisted Hill in the murder ; fourteen peers voting that he was guilty, and sixteen not guilty. Mountford, who was in his thirty-third year, was, says Cibber, generally lamented by his friends and all lovers of the theatre.

Mrs. Bracegirdle's name appears as a principal performer in many of the comedies that were performed about the end of the seventeenth and the earlier part of the eighteenth century. She appears to have made an extraordinary impression by her manner of singing an impassioned song, composed by Eccles, in the character of Marcella, in the second part of *Don Quixote*. In the *Orpheus Britannicus* there is a song, "Whilst I with grief on you did look," addressed to her in compliment to that performance.

"Mrs. Bracegirdle," says Aston, a contemporary writer, "that Diana of the stage, had many assailants on her virtue, as Lord Lovelace and Mr. Congreve, the last of which had her company most. But she ever resisted his vicious attacks, and yet was always uneasy at his leaving her. She was very shy of Lord Lovelace's company, as being an engaging man who dressed well ; and as every day his servant came to her to ask her how she did, she always returned her answer in the most obeisant words and behaviour, that she was indifferent well, she humbly thanked his lordship. She was of a lovely height, with dark brown hair and eye-brows,

black sparkling eyes, and a fresh blushy complexion; and, whenever she exerted herself, had an involuntary flushing in her breast, neck, and face, having continually a cheerful aspect, and a fine set of even white teeth; never making an exit but that she left the audience in an imitation of her pleasant countenance. Her virtue had its reward both in applause and specie; for it happened, that as the Dukes of Dorset and Devonshire, Lord Halifax, and other nobles, over a bottle, were extolling Mrs. Bracegirdle's virtuous behaviour; 'Come,' says Lord Halifax, 'you all commend her virtue, but why do we not present this incomparable woman with something worthy her acceptance?' His lordship deposited two hundred guineas, which the rest made up eight hundred, and sent to her, with encomiums on her virtue. She was, when on the stage, diurnally charitable, going often into Clare-market and giving money to the poor unemployed basketwomen, insomuch that she could not pass that neighbourhood without the thankful acclamations of people of all degrees; so that if any person had affronted her, they would have been in danger of being killed directly; and yet this good woman was an actress."

The character of this remarkable woman did not escape obloquy. She was grossly attacked by the notorious Tom Brown; and Gildon (in his *Comparison between the two Stages*, 1702) says, "her virtue is all a juggle, 'tis legerdemain; the best

on't is, she falls into good hands, and the secrecy of the intrigue secures her; but as to her innocence, I believe no more on't than I believe of John Mandeville." The circumstances of her life, however, in so far as they are known, do not give countenance to these accusations, which are probably calumnies resulting from personal enmity. Gildon also says, that, after the appearance of Jeremy Collier's book, she, along with one or two other performers, were fined for uttering profane or indecent expressions on the stage. Whatever grounds there may have been, however, for charging Mrs. Bracegirdle with secret irregularities, it is certain that she conducted herself with decency and prudence, passed through life with credit, supported the respectability of her profession, and never, by her own example, gave countenance or encouragement to the impropriety of others.

Mrs. Bracegirdle continued to perform till the year 1707, when she left the stage. In the latter part of her life she resided in the family of Francis Chute, Esq., one of the king's counsel, at his house in Norfolk-street in the Strand, where she died, in 1748, in the eighty-fifth year of her age.

Dryden, who had furnished Purcell with subjects worthy of his genius, did not long survive him. The poet's last production was *The Secular Masque*, which was written about the end of the year 1699, and, from its title, seems to have been intended to celebrate the conclusion of the century;

Dryden having erroneously supposed that the century terminated with the year 1699. It is a mythological satire on the reigns of the Stuarts, the predecessors of King William. By the introduction of the deities of the chase, of war, and of love, as governing the various changes of the seventeenth century, Dryden alludes to the sylvan sports of James I., the bloody wars of his son, and the licentious gallantry which prevailed in the court of Charles II., and of James, his successor. It was performed in 1700, but it does not seem certain whether or not the poet was then alive. It was favourably received; and the music, which is said to have been composed by Daniel Purcell, was much approved. Though this piece is a mere trifle, it was revived with success at Drury Lane, in 1749, with new music, by Dr. Boyce.

John Eccles holds a high rank among the musicians of this period, and many of his compositions are still well known to the lovers of the old English music. He was much employed in writing for the stage. He composed the music in a tragedy, by Dennis, called *Rinaldo and Armida*, which was performed in 1690; and in which the song, "The jolly breeze," was long popular. He composed the music to Congreve's Masque, *The Judgment of Paris*, which was published entire. A collection of his theatrical compositions, consisting of act-tunes, dances, and incidental songs, in a number of dramatic pieces, was published by him with a

dedication to Queen Anne. It contains many admirable songs, which are indeed inferior only to those of Purcell. The mad song, "I burn, my brain consumes to ashes," sung by Mrs. Bracegirdle, in the character of Marcella, in *Don Quixote*, was one of the masterpieces of that favourite actress. In the *Orpheus Britannicus* there is a song by Purcell, in compliment to Mrs. Bracegirdle's performance of Eccles's song. In the latter part of his life, Eccles was master of the queen's band, and was known to the musical world only by the odes on her majesty's birth-day, the new year, &c., which he composed in the course of his duty.

Eccles had two brothers, Henry and Thomas, both musicians. Henry was an eminent violinist, in the service of the French court, and the author of a set of excellent violin solos, published at Paris in 1720. Thomas is remarkable as having been perhaps the last of those itinerant musicians who used to frequent taverns, and play for the entertainment of the guests. He was a man of talent in his profession, but reduced by dissolute habits to this degrading exercise of it. The following account of him and his performance was given to Sir John Hawkins, by a good judge of music who heard him play. "It was about the month of November, in the year 1735, that I, with some friends, were met to spend the evening at a tavern in the city, when this man, in a mean but decent garb, was introduced to us by the waiter. Imme-

diately on opening the door, I heard the twang of one of his strings from under his coat, which was accompanied by the question, 'Gentlemen, will you please to hear any music?' Our curiosity and the modesty of the man's deportment inclined us to say yes; and music he gave us, such as I had never heard before, nor shall again, under the same circumstances. With as fine and delicate a hand as I ever heard, he played the whole fifth and ninth solos of Corelli, two songs of Mr. Handel, 'Del minacciar' in Otho, and 'Spero si, mio caro bene,' in Admetus: in short, his performance was such as would command the attention of the nicest ear, and left us, his auditors, much at a loss to guess what it was that constrained him to seek his living in a way so disreputable. He made no secret of his name; he said he was the youngest of three brothers, and that Henry, the middle one, had been his master, and was then in the service of the king of France. We were very little disposed to credit the account he gave us of his brother's situation in France; but the collection of solos, above mentioned to have been published by him at Paris, put it out of question." Upon inquiry some time afterwards, it appeared that he was idle and given to drinking. He was well known to the musicians of the time, who thought themselves disgraced by this practice of his, which was called going a-busking.*

* There are many allusions, in old English writers, to the

In 1698, Jeremy Collier published his celebrated "View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage;" a book in which he assailed most of the living writers, from Dryden to Durfey. This book made a great impression on the public, who were confounded when they contemplated the mass of profanity, immorality, and indecency, which was thus concentrated and brought all at once before their eyes. "The wise and the pious," says Dr. Johnson, "caught the alarm; and the nation wondered why it had so long suffered irreligion and licentiousness to be openly taught at the public charge." Dryden, to his honour, admitted the justice of the accusation against him-

practice of entertaining the guests at inns and taverns with music. Fynes Moryson, in his *Itinerary*, giving an account of the manner in which it was customary to receive and treat a traveller at an English inn, says, "Then the host and hostesse visits him, and if he will eate with the host, or at a common table with others, his meale will cost him sixpence, or in some places but fourpence (yet this course is less honourable, and not used by gentlemen): but if he will eate in his chamber, he commands what meate he will, according to his appetite, and as much as he thinks fit for him and his companie; yea, the kitchen is open to him to command the meat to be dressed as he best likes; and when he sits at table, the host or hostesse will accompany him, or, if they have many guests, will at least visit him, taking it for curtesie to be bid sit down. While he eates, if he have company especially, he shall be offered musicke, which he may freely take or refuse; and if he be solitary, the musicians will give him the good day with musicke in the morning."

self. "I shall say the less of Mr. Collier," said the veteran poet, in the preface to his *Fables*, "because in many things he has taxed me justly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine, which can be truly argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one." It does not appear that such an *amende honorable* as this was made by any other of the dramatic writers whom Mr. Collier had chastised; but his book contributed to the reformation of a great evil. "Collier's attack on the stage," says Sir Walter Scott, "was attended with good consequences, which that active disputant lived to witness. Indecencies were no longer either fashionable or tolerated; and by degrees the ladies began to fill the boxes at a new play, without either the necessity of wearing masks, or the risk of incurring censure. Later times have carried this laudable restraint still farther; till at last, if we have lost almost all the wit of our predecessors, we at least have retained none of their licentiousness."

CHAPTER IX.

Degeneracy of the Italian opera at the commencement of the last century—Marcello's satire, *Il Teatro alla moda*—Principal composers of that period—Scarlatti—Caldara—Lotti—Vivaldi—Improvements effected by them—Dramatic poets—Apostolo Zeno—Metastasio—His appearance an era in the Italian opera.

About the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, the Italian musical drama appears, for a time, to have degenerated, and to have become liable to many abuses. As public theatres multiplied in the different towns, and each department of the drama became a profession giving employment to numbers of people in the capacities of dramatists, composers, actors, and singers, these occupations came to be exercised by ignorant and worthless pretenders: so that, notwithstanding the genius of a few eminent individuals, the general standard of excellence, in every branch of the art, was much lowered. The Italian musical dramas of that period were full of the most ridiculous absurdities. Regularity of construction,

consistency of character, and poetical beauty, were disregarded, provided the eye and ear were gratified with splendid sights and feats of vocal execution. In one of these pieces, which represented the siege of Persepolis, a mine exploded and blew up a part of the city. In another, Alcibiades, the Athenian general, came on the stage in a fashionable carriage, preceded by couriers and outriders, according to the mode of the day. In an opera called *Dido*, written by Businelli, a Venetian poet, the first act comprehended the burning of Troy; the second, the arrival of Æneas after seven years' wandering on the shores of Carthage; the third, the flight of Æneas, and suicide of the deserted queen. These dramas, too, contained a mixture of tragedy and comedy which had neither the grandeur of the one, nor the vivacity of the other. Gods and heroes were mixed with buffoons, tragical incidents with farcical jokes, and lofty or impassioned declamation with doggrel or ribaldry. In *Giasone*, an opera by Giacinto Andrea Cicognini, of Florence, an eminent poet of that day, there is the following dialogue between King Egeus and Demos, a stuttering servant. The situation is sufficiently serious, the aged king inquiring anxiously about the departure of his son.

" *Egeo.* E verso dove andranno ?

Demo. (*Balbutiente*) S'imbarcano per co, co, co, per, co, co, co.

Egeo. Per Coimbra ?

Demo. Per co, co, co.
Egeo. Per Coralto?
Demo. Oibò! per co, co, co.
Egeo. Per Cosandro?
Demo. Nemmeno; per co, co, co.
Egeo. Per Corinto.
Demo. Ah! ah! bene
Mi cavasti di pene."

In these dramas, love was always introduced as the principal topic; and it was often treated in a childish as well as indecent manner. In one of them there is a duet between two lovers, the subject of which is their alternately asking, refusing, and giving each other kisses; the performers, while singing it, "suiting the action to the word."

One of the musical beauties of that time was the mimicry of various sounds by means of instruments. In an *Opera buffa*, called *Il podestà di Coloniola*, the following verses were sung, while the composer, in his accompaniments, imitated the sounds of the animals described by the singer;

"Talor la granocchiella nel pantano
Per allegrezza canta qua quarà;
Tribbia il grillo tre, tre, tre;
L'agnellino bè, bè, bè;
L'assinuolo whu, whu, whu,
Ed il gal cucchericù;
Ogni bestia sta gaia, io sempre carico
Di guidaleschi a ogni otta mi rammarico."

And in a piece called *L'Amore in Cucina*, per-

formed at Bologna, the composer imitated with the orchestra the crowing of the cock and the sound of cannon; solely because some mention was made of the bird, and because one of the characters said,

> " Io del canone al suon
> Solo risponderò bun-ban-bun-bon."

Imitations of the cries of animals, or other natural sounds, by means of instruments, when discreetly used, may really be a musical beauty. But the excess to which they were carried by the composers of those days was most ridiculous.

Although Cicognini was one of the chief corruptors of the Italian musical drama, by introducing into it these follies and absurdities, yet, in his own time, he was looked upon as a restorer of the drama. His pieces were many times reprinted; and the Italian critics held him up as a model for imitation.

In the year 1720, there appeared a satirical work of Benedetto Marcello, the celebrated author of the *Psalms*, which gives a lively picture of the musical drama at that period. Marcello was a Venetian nobleman, still more distinguished by his genius and various accomplishments than by his rank. Besides his great sacred work, which has rendered his name illustrious, he wrote the poetry and music of several operas, besides sonnets and other lyrical pieces. His book, which we have just mentioned, is called *Il Teatro alla moda*, and is a curious

satire on the manners as well as the music of the time. It is described in the title-page as being "an easy and sure method of composing and performing Italian operas in the modern fashion;" and professes to give useful and necessary advice to poets, composers, singers, managers, orchestra-players, machinists, scene-painters, prompters, copyists, the actresses' mothers and protectors, and other persons belonging to the theatre. A few of these ironical counsels will give an idea of the whole.

The author begins by telling the poet, that there is no occasion for his reading, or having read, the old Greek and Latin authors: for this good reason, that the ancients never read any of the works of the moderns. He will not ask any questions about the ability of the performers, but will rather inquire whether the theatre is provided with a good bear, a good lion, a good nightingale, good thunder, lightning, and earthquakes. He will introduce a magnificent show in his last scene, and conclude with the usual chorus in honour of the sun, the moon, or the manager. In dedicating his *libretto* to some great personage, he will select him for his riches rather than his learning, and will give a share of the gratuity to his patron's cook, or maître d'hôtel, from whom he will obtain all his titles, that he may blazon them on his title-pages, with an &c. &c. He will exalt the great man's family and ancestors; make an abundant use of such phrases

as liberality, and generosity of soul; and if he cannot find any subject of eulogy, (as is often the case,) he will say, that he is silent through fear of hurting his patron's modesty, but that Fame, with her hundred brazen trumpets, will spread his immortal name from pole to pole. He will do well to protest to the reader that his opera was composed in his youth, and may add that it was written in a few days: by this he will show that he is a true *modern*, and has a proper contempt for the antiquated precept, *nonumque prematur in annum.* He may add, too, that he became a poet solely for his amusement, and to divert his mind from graver occupations: but that he had published his work by the advice of his friends and the command of his patron, and by no means from any love of praise or desire of profit. He will take care not to neglect the usual explanation of the three great points of every drama, the place, time, and action; the place signifying in such-and-such a theatre; the time, from eight to twelve o'clock at night; the action, the ruin of the manager. The incidents of the piece should consist of dungeons, daggers, poison, boar-hunts, earthquakes, sacrifices, madness, and so forth; because the people are always greatly moved by such unexpected things. A good *modern* poet ought to know nothing about music, because the ancients, according to Strabo, Pliny, &c., thought this knowledge necessary. At the rehearsals he should never tell his meaning to

any of the performers, wisely reflecting that they always want to do everything in their own way. If a husband and wife are discovered in prison, and one of them is led away to die, it is indispensable that the other remain to sing an air, which should be to lively words, to relieve the feelings of the audience, and make them understand that the whole affair is a joke. If two of the characters make love, or plot a conspiracy, it should always be in the presence of servants and attendants. The part of a father, or a tyrant, when it is the principal character, should always be given to a soprano; reserving the tenors and basses for captains of the guard, confidants, shepherds, messengers, and so forth.

The modern composer is told that there is no occasion for his being master of the principles of composition; a little practice being all that is necessary. He need not know anything of poetry, or give himself any trouble about the meaning of the words, or even the quantities of the syllables. Neither is it necessary that he should study the properties of the stringed or wind instruments; if he can play on the harpsichord, it will do very well. It will, however, be not amiss for him to have been for some years a violin-player, or music-copier for some celebrated composer, whose original scenes he may treasure up, and thus supply himself with subjects for his airs, recitatives, or choruses. He will by no means think of reading the opera

through, but will compose it line by line; using, for the airs, *motivi* which he has lying by him: and if the words do not go well below the notes, he will torment the poet till they are altered to his mind. When the singer comes to a cadence, the composer will make all the instruments stop, leaving it to the singer to do whatever he pleases. He will serve the manager on very low terms, considering the thousands of crowns that the singers cost him:—he will therefore content himself with an inferior salary to the lowest of these, provided that he is not wronged by the bear, the attendants, or the scene-shifters, being put above him. When he is walking with the singers, he will always give them the wall, keep his hat in his hand, and remain a step in the rear; considering that the lowest of them, on the stage, is at least a general, a captain of the guards, or some such personage. All the airs should be formed of the same materials—long divisions, holding notes, and repetitions of insignificant words, as *amore amore*, *impero impero*, *Europa Europa*, *furori furori*, *orgoglio orgoglio*, &c. &c.; and therefore the composer should have before him a memorandum of the things necessary for the termination of every air. This will enable him to eschew variety, which is no longer in use. After ending a recitative in a flat key, he will suddenly begin an air in three or four sharps; and this by way of novelty. If the modern composer wishes to write in four parts, two of them must proceed in

unison or octave, only taking care that there shall be a diversity of movement: so that if the one part proceeds by minims or crotchets, the other will be in quavers or semiquavers. He will charm the audience with airs accompanied by the instruments *pizzicati* or *con sordini*, trumpets, and other *effective* contrivances. He will not compose airs with a simple bass accompaniment, because this is no longer the custom; and, besides, he would take as much time to compose one of these as a dozen with the orchestra. The modern composer will oblige the manager to furnish him with a large orchestra of violins, oboes, horns, &c., saving him rather the expense of double basses, of which there is no occasion to make any use, except in tuning at the outset. The overture will be a movement in the French style, or a *prestissimo* in semiquavers in a major key, to which will succeed a *piano* in the minor; concluding with a minuet, gavot, or jig, again in the major key. In this manner the composer will avoid all fugues, syncopations, and treatment of subjects, as being antiquated contrivances, quite banished from modern music. The modern composer will be most attentive to all the ladies of the theatre, supplying them with plenty of old songs transposed to suit their voices, and telling each of them that the opera is supported by her talent alone. He will bring every night some of his friends, and seat them in the orchestra; giving the double bass or violoncello (as being the

most useless instruments) leave of absence to make room for them.

The singer is informed that there is no occasion for having practised the *solfeggio;* because he would thus be in danger of acquiring a firm voice, just intonation, and the power of singing in tune; things wholly useless in modern music. Nor is it very necessary that he should be able to read or write, know how to pronounce the words or understand their meaning, provided he can run divisions, make shakes, cadences, &c. He will always complain of his part, saying that it is not in his way, that the airs are not in his style, and so on: and he will sing an air by some other composer, protesting that at such a court, or in the presence of such a great personage, that air carried away all the applause, and he was obliged to repeat it a dozen times in an evening. At the rehearsals he will merely hum his airs, and will insist on having the time in his own way. He will stand with one hand in his waistcoat and the other in his breeches pocket, and take care not to allow a syllable to be heard. He will always keep his hat on his head, though a person of quality should speak to him, in order to avoid catching cold: and he will not bow his head to anybody, remembering the kings, princes, and emperors whom he is in the habit of personating. On the stage he will sing with shut teeth, doing all he can to prevent a word he says from being understood, and, in the recitatives,

paying no respect either to commas or periods. While another performer is reciting a soliloquy, or singing an air, he will be saluting the company in the boxes, or tittering with musicians in the orchestra, or the attendants; because the audience knows very well that he is Signor So-and-so, the *musico*, and not prince Zoroastro, whom he is representing. A modern virtuoso will be hard to prevail on to sing at a private party. When he arrives, he will walk up to the mirror, settle his wig, draw down his ruffles, and pull up his cravat to show his diamond brooch. He will then touch the harpsichord very carelessly, and begin his air three or four times, as if he could not recollect it. Having granted this great favour, he will begin talking (by way of gathering applause) with some lady, telling her stories about his travels, correspondence, and professional intrigues; all the while ogling his companion with passionate glances, and throwing back the curls of his peruke, sometimes on one shoulder, sometimes on the other. He will every minute offer the lady snuff in a different box, in one of which he will point out his own portrait; and will show her some magnificent diamond, the gift of a distinguished patron, saying that he would offer it for her acceptance were it not for delicacy. Thus he will perhaps make an impression on her heart, and, at all events, make a great figure in the eyes of the company. In the society of literary men, however eminent, he will

always take precedence, because, with most people, the singer has the credit of being an artist, while the literary man has no consideration at all. He will even advise them to embrace his profession, as the singer has plenty of money as well as fame, while the man of letters is very apt to die of hunger. If the singer is a bass, he should constantly sing tenor passages as high as he can. If a tenor, he ought to go as low as he can in the scale of the bass, or get up, with a falsetto voice, into the regions of the contralto, without minding whether he sings through his nose or his throat. He will pay his court to all the principal *cantatrices* and their protectors; and need not despair, by means of his talent and exemplary modesty, to acquire the title of a count, marquis, or chevalier.

The *prima donna* receives ample instructions in her duties both on and off the stage. She is taught how to make engagements, and to screw the manager up to exorbitant terms; how to obtain the "protection" of rash amateurs, who are to attend her at all times, pay her expenses, make her presents, and submit to her caprices. She is taught to be careless at rehearsals, to be insolent to the other performers, and to perform all manner of musical absurdities on the stage. She must have a music-master to teach her variations, passages, and embellishments to her airs; and some familiar friend, an advocate or a doctor, to teach her how to move her arms, turn her head, and use her

handkerchief, without telling her why, for that would only confuse her head. She is to endeavour to vary her airs every night; and though the variations may be at cross purposes with the bass, or the violin part, or the harmony of the accompaniments, that matters little, as a modern conductor is deaf and dumb. In her airs and recitatives, in action she will take care every night to use the same motions of her hand, her head, her fan, and her handkerchief. If she orders a character to be put in chains, and addresses him in an air of rage or disdain, during the symphony she should talk and laugh with him, point out to him people in the boxes, and show how very little she is in earnest. She will get hold of a new passage in rapid triplets, and introduce it in all her airs, quick, slow, lively, or sad; and the higher she can rise in the scale, the surer she will be of having all the principal parts allotted to her.

A modern manager, says our author, ought to have no knowledge of music, acting, poetry, painting, or anything belonging to a theatre. He will engage his composers, and others, at the suggestion of his friends, taking care to be as narrow as possible in his terms, except with the singers, particularly the ladies, who must be well paid. He will put an opera into the hands of the composer on the fourth of the month, telling him that it must positively be brought out on the twelfth, and that therefore he need not be very nice about the cor-

rectness of his score. The greater part of his company should consist of women; and if two ladies dispute about having the first part, he will get two parts composed, precisely equal in airs, recitatives, and everything else; taking care even that the names of the characters shall contain the same number of letters. He will engage singers of small reputation, having a view rather to their looks than to their talent; for, if pretty, they will find plenty of "protectors," which will be of advantage to his theatre. In playing his violoncello and double bass, he will abate all the second parts of the airs which they have not played; desiring, for that purpose, his composer to write these second parts without putting a note of bass to them. If the house is thin, he will allow the performers to leave out their recitatives and sing half their songs, and make game with each other on the stage. On such nights he will not insist on the orchestra rosining their bows, nor make any objection to the attendants smoking behind the scenes.

In the directions to the orchestra, "the oboes, flutes, trumpets, bassoons, &c.," are advised to be always out of tune. From this it would appear that wind-instruments were in common use in the Italian opera at an earlier period than is generally supposed. The author goes on to instruct the machinists, scene-painters, attendants, dressmakers, dancers, prompters; the amateur patrons of the theatre and protectors of the *cantatrices*, with their mothers

(a set of persons on whom he bestows very particular attention) in the same sarcastic vein. The grave irony and quaint style of the book are very amusing; and the author makes his theatrical ladies talk a *patois* so rude as to be almost unintelligible—an indication of their want of education and breeding, and the low position which they then held in the scale of society.

In a sketch professedly satirical, some allowance must be made for exaggeration and caricature: but it bears every mark of having been drawn from the life; and its general truth is confirmed by the number of particulars in which it resembles the musical stage, even after the lapse of a century. In the days of Marcello, as in our own, there were distinguished dramatic poets, composers, and singers; but the bulk of them were in many respects such as he describes, and are so to this hour. The Italian playwright, called, *par excellence*, "poeta," is still generally an ignorant, despised creature, the *serf* of some particular theatre, and cringingly obsequious to the popular composer and fashionable singers, who requite his humility by making him the butt of their ridicule.* In the sarcastic advices which Marcello gives to this class of persons, as well as to the composers and performers, we recognise many approved practices of the present day. One difference there is; the present Italian stage,

* See the anecdote of Rossini and Tottola, the "poeta" of the theatre of San-Carlo, in Stendhal's *Vie de Rossini*.

among its poets and composers, can boast of no such names as adorned it in the time of Marcello.

The greatest of the Italian composers for the theatre, who flourished at the beginning of the last century, was the celebrated ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI. This great musician was born at Naples in 1650, and spent the greatest part of his life in his native city, where he died in 1728. He was a voluminous writer for the church and the chamber, as well as the theatre. He is said to have composed above a hundred operas, which are now forgotten; but his numerous cantatas are still the admiration of musicians. ANTONIO CALDARA was also a great dramatic composer, though it is only by his works for the church that he is now known. He produced his first opera at Venice in 1697, and his last (Metastasio's *Achille in Sciro*) at Vienna in 1736. He was during the greatest part of his life in the imperial service, and died at Vienna in 1763, at the age of ninety. ANTONIO LOTTI, whose fine compositions for the church are still extant, composed a number of operas for the Venetian theatre between 1698 and 1717. ANTONIO VIVALDI was a great violinist as well as a dramatic composer. He was for some time *maestro di capella* to the landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, but afterwards became director of the conservatory of *La Pietà* at Venice, where he resided from the year 1713 till his death. He was an ecclesiastic; and it is related of him, that one day, while he was saying mass, a theme for a fugue

having suddenly struck him, he quitted the altar to the surprise of the congregation, hastened into the sacristy to write it down, and, having done so, returned to finish his office. For this misdemeanor he was brought before the inquisition; but the fault having been considered as an aberration of genius, he received no further punishment than a prohibition from saying mass for the future.

These were the principal composers of the beginning of the last century who had produced operas before the date of Marcello's satire, and who contributed to those improvements in dramatic music which were carried further by Leo, Vinci, and others who came after them.

Similar improvements gradually took place in the dramatic composition of Italian operas. They became more regular and rational in their structure and incidents. It was no longer necessary that their subjects should be drawn from the classic mythology, or the marvels and enchantments of the middle ages. "Gods and devils," says Arteaga, "were banished from the stage, as soon as poets discovered the art of making men speak with dignity." It was found better that the feelings should be roused by an interesting story, and the heart touched by noble or pathetic sentiments, than that the eye should be dazzled by glittering shows, or the fancy amused, at the expense of reason and common sense, by absurd adventures and incredible prodigies. The opera, too, received dignity and congruity by being

cleared of the low buffoonery which it had been usual to introduce into the most lofty and serious scenes.

Many poets, whose names are now forgotten, even in Italy, had the merit of contributing to this reformation of the musical drama. Of some of the poets of this period we shall have occasion to speak, in tracing the introduction of the Italian opera into England. The first musical dramatist of lasting celebrity was APOSTOLO ZENO, who, for a time, was the idol of his countrymen, till he was thrown into the shade by the far greater splendour of his successor Metastasio.

Apostolo Zeno was not only an eminent poet, but a learned critic and antiquary. He was born in the year 1669, and descended from a noble Venetian family. At an early age he applied himself to literature and the study of the history and antiquities of his country. In 1696 he instituted at Venice a distinguished literary society, called the Academy *Degli Animosi*, and was the editor of the *Giornale de' Letterati d'Italia*, which he carried on from 1710 till 1719. His first musical drama, *L'Inganni felici*, was performed at Venice in 1695. In 1718 he entered into the service of the Emperor Charles VI., in the capacity of imperial poet-laureate; in which situation he resided at Vienna till 1731, when he returned to Venice, his native city, where he died in 1750, at the age of eighty-one. Previous to the time of his quitting Vienna, Zeno had produced

forty-six operas and seventeen oratorios, besides a number of other dramatic pieces. After his return to Venice, he employed his latter days in the composition of several learned and valuable works on subjects of history, antiquities, and criticism. His dramatic works were published at Venice in 1744, in ten volumes, by Count Gozzi; and in 1752 his letters were published in three volumes by Forcellini. His commentary on the *Bibl. dell'Eloquenza Italiana*, one of the best of his critical works, was published in 1753, with a preface dictated by himself immediately before his death. He was a man of great modesty, and, as appears from passages in his letters, thought diffidently of his own talents. Being conscious of the decay of his poetical powers, he recommended, some years before he quitted Vienna, that Metastasio should be associated with him in the office of poet-laureate; and, after the arrival of his young colleague, seems to have attempted nothing but oratorios.

Apostolo Zeno was called the Corneille of the musical drama; and, in the bold and original genius which enabled him to leave his contemporaries so far behind him, he certainly resembled the father of French tragedy. But the quality of his works was much injured by the quickness with which he produced them. He took only eight days, as Maffei informs us, to write an opera; and this haste led him into innumerable negligences, both of construction and style. He was not suffi-

ciently aware of the rapidity of action which the musical drama requires. Hence his scenes are often too long, and his plots so complex and crowded with incident, that one of his pieces might furnish materials for two or three. His language is rich in poetical beauties, and possesses great vigour and energy ; but he has neither the delicacy of thought and feeling, nor the exquisite sweetness of versification, which so eminently distinguish the incomparable Metastasio.

The appearance of Metastasio may be considered as an era in the history of the Italian opera, not only in regard to its poetry, but its music. Though not an artist, he possessed the mind of a musician; and his judgment and taste had a powerful influence on the greatest dramatic composers of his time. Before entering upon this new era, we shall now notice the progress which, previous to its commencement, the Italian opera had made in other countries.

CHAPTER X.

The early musical drama in Germany—German operas—Introduction of the Italian opera—German composers of the seventeenth century—Mattheson—Keiser—Arrival of Metastasio.

During the seventeenth century the musical drama made little progress in Germany. The music of that country resembled its literature; it was learned and profound, with little imagination, elegance, or grace. There were many great organists and composers for the church; men deeply versed in the mysteries of counterpoint, with whom music was the art of constructing fugues and resolving harmonical puzzles, and by whom, consequently, simple and popular melody was looked upon as unworthy of notice.

We are told, indeed, that operas in the German language and by German composers, were performed at the courts of German sovereigns early in the seventeenth century. But they must have been very rude productions; as all traces of them, even the names of their authors, seem to be lost.

The first operas which have been commemorated

as performed in Germany, were imported from Italy. About the year 1630, Martin Opitz, who has been called the father of the German drama, translated from the Italian the *Dafne* of Rinuccini; and the music having been adapted to the German words by a composer of the name of Schutz, the opera was performed at the court of Dresden, on the occasion of the marriage of the Landgrave of Hesse with the sister of the elector of Saxony. Soon afterwards, several other Italian operas were adapted to German words, and performed at Ratisbon, Munich, and other places.

Italian operas now began to be performed in their original language. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the imperial court, under the Emperor Leopold, was full of Italian ministers and nobles, and the emperor himself was fond of Italian music. Such, indeed, was this sovereign's love of the art, that it was exhibited as "his ruling passion, strong in death." It is related, that, when on his deathbed, and after he had performed his last devotions with his confessor, he ordered his band to be called in, and expired while listening to their music. Leopold retained in his service several Italian poets and composers, to furnish operas for the imperial court. Among these was Antonio Draghi, a composer of celebrity, who remained in the imperial service near forty years. Several dramas were written for the emperor's court by the Marchese Santinelli, an Italian nobleman.

Hitherto, musical dramas, as in other countries, had been performed only at the courts of princes: but they now began to make their appearance in public theatres. The first opera, publicly exhibited on a German stage, was Thiele's *Adam and Eve*, which was performed in the German language, at Hamburg, in 1678. The second was *Orontes*, performed the same year. After this period many German operas were performed at Hamburg, the principal composers of which were Strunck,* Franck, Förtsch, Conradi, and Cousser; the last of whom afterwards came to England, where he obtained the place of master of the state band in Ireland. About the close of the century, the celebrated Keiser began to compose for the Hamburg theatre; and

* Strunck was violinist to the elector of Hanover, and was chiefly celebrated for his wonderful powers as a performer on that instrument. While travelling in Italy, he paid a visit to Corelli at Rome. Corelli, not knowing his person, but finding, from his conversation, that he was a musical performer, inquired what was his instrument. Strunck said that he played a little on the violin, and begged the favour that the great Italian master would let him hear his performance. Corelli readily complied, and exerted his abilities for the gratification of the unknown amateur. On laying down the violin, he requested Strunck to play something in his turn. Strunck began to play rather carelessly, but yet in such a style as to obtain a compliment on the freedom of his bow, and a remark that he promised, with practice, to become an excellent player. Strunck, with a quiet smile, put all the strings out of tune, and then began to play with amazing execution, correcting with his fingers the false tuning of the instrument; till at last, Corelli, in utter amazement, exclaimed, "They call me Arcangelo; but, by heaven, Sir, you must be *Archidiavolo!*"

the operas of the Abate Steffani, which he had set to Italian words for the court of Hanover, began to be performed at Hamburg in the German language, except the airs, which were usually sung in Italian. We shall afterwards see, that a similar medley of Italian and English was made use of when the Italian opera was first introduced into this country. This custom (absurd as it seems) prevailed in Germany so late as the year 1733, when Graun's opera of *Pharao*, a German version of the *Gianguir* of Apostolo Zeno, was performed at Brunswick ;—the recitatives only being translated into German, while the airs were sung in the original Italian.

Mattheson, whose name will be immortalized as the youthful friend and rival of Handel, was a composer for the Hamburg stage. Mattheson was not only a composer, but an actor, singer, and instrumental performer. On the harpsichord he was considered equal, if not superior, to Handel. As a composer, he seems to have had little genius, and to have been given to pedantry and puerile conceits. His biographers tell us, that, towards the close of his life, he composed his own funeral anthem; and that, in setting the words, from the Revelations, "And there was a rainbow round about the throne," he contrived, in a very full score, to make every part form an arch by a gradual ascent and descent of the notes on the paper; conceiving, it would seem, that this appearance to the eyes of the performers would convey the idea of a rainbow to

the ears of the hearers. One of Mattheson's operas caused a duel between the two young rivals, which nearly cost Handel his life. This was *Cleopatra*, in which the composer himself performed the part of Antony, while Handel, as conductor, sat at the harpsichord in the orchestra. On the death of Antony, which happened early in the piece, Mattheson divested himself of his royal trappings, and came into the orchestra to take his usual place at the harpsichord. Handel, however, would not give it up, and a violent quarrel ensued. As they were leaving the theatre, Mattheson gave Handel a slap in the face; they drew their swords, and a desperate encounter ensued in the market-place, which was fortunately terminated by Mattheson's sword breaking against one of his adversary's buttons, or, as others say, against the score of Mattheson's opera, which Handel had buttoned under his coat.

The greatest German composer of this period was Keiser, whose once splendid reputation, contrasted with the oblivion into which he has now fallen, affords a striking instance of the instability of musical fame. Keiser was born in 1673, and died in 1739. He kept possession of the Hamburg stage for more than forty years, and composed above a hundred operas. "This master," says Burney, "was as sure of fancy and originality, whenever he put pen to paper, as Haydn is at present. In a manuscript collection of near seventy

cantatas by the greatest composers of his time, both of Italy and Germany, in which there are twelve by Keiser, in opening the book by chance, in any part of it where his cantatas are inserted, it is instantly known to be his music at the first glance; so new are the passages, and so different the arrangement of the notes from that of his companions in the collection, amounting to near thirty of the first order. For grace and facility I do not recommend him; indeed they were little sought or known during his time; but for modulation, ingenuity, and new ideas, he had scarcely his equal." The famous Hasse said to Dr. Burney, that "Keiser was one of the greatest musicians the world had ever seen;" and yet, with all his greatness, he is now almost as completely forgotten as if he had never existed.

We are informed by Riccoboni, in his *General History of the Stage*, that, in the beginning of the last century, the performers in the German operas at Hamburg were all tradesmen or handicrafts. "Your shoemaker," he says, "was often the first performer on the stage; and you might have bought fruit and sweetmeats of the same girl whom the night before you saw in the character of Armida or Semiramis." But this account must be taken with considerable qualification: for, as has been already mentioned, Mattheson was a performer on the Hamburg stage; and Hasse, before he went to

Italy, was a tenor-singer on the same stage, in the operas of Keiser.

Such was the state of the musical drama in Germany till the period when it received a new impulse by the arrival of Metastasio, who spent almost his whole life at Vienna, in the service of the imperial court.

CHAPTER XI.

The Italian Opera introduced into England—Battista Draghi—Arrival of Italian singers—Margherita de l'Epine—Mrs. Tofts—Musical factions—Opera of *Arsinoe*—*Camilla*—*Rosamond*—Addison and Clayton—Nicolini—*Pyrrhus and Demetrius*—The *Tatler*—Leveridge—*Almahide*—*Hydaspes*—The *Spectator*.

We have already seen, that, during the time of Charles the Second, the English dramatic music was in the French style, and that it so continued till an English school was founded by the genius of Purcell. Before that time, however, Italian music had begun to be heard in England; and Purcell himself acknowledged the benefit he had derived from the study of the Italian masters. It had become fashionable for English gentlemen to visit Italy; and they returned with a taste for the music, painting, and poetry of that classic land. We have given, in a preceding chapter, Evelyn's account of the Italian opera at Venice: and the following passage in Pepys's *Diary* gives a curious view of the progress of Italian music, and the general state of the art, in this country.

"January 12th, 1667. With my Lord Brouncke to his house, there to hear some Italian musique, and here we met Tom Killigrew, Sir Robert Murray, and the Italian, Signor Baptista,* who hath prepared a play in Italian for the opera, which Sir T. Killigrew do intend to have up; and here he did sing one of the acts. He himself is the poet as well as the musician, and did sing the whole from the words without any musique prickt, and played all along upon a harpsicon most admirably, and the composition most excellent. The words I did not understand, and so knew not how they were fitted, but believe very well, and all the recitativo very fine. But I perceive there is a proper accent in every country's discourse, and that do reach in their setting of notes to words, which, therefore, cannot be natural to anybody else but them; so that I am not so much smitten with it as if I were acquainted with their accent. But the whole composition is certainly most excellent; and the poetry, Sir T. Killigrew and Sir R. Murray, who understood the words, did say was most excellent. I confess I was most mightily pleased with the musique." Pepys adds: "He (Sir T. Killigrew) tells me that he hath gone several times (eight or ten times he tells me) hence to Rome, to hear good musique; so much he loves it, though he never did sing or play a note. That he hath ever endeavoured, in the late king's time,

* Battista Draghi.

and in this, to introduce good musique; but he never could do it, there never having been any musique there better than ballads and songs. "Hermitt Poore,' and 'Chiny Chase' [Chevy Chase] was all the musique we had; and yet no ordinary fiddlers get so much money as ours do here, which speaks our rudeness still." A sad account of the state of music at that time!

The Italian opera which Pepys speaks of does not seem ever to have been represented; and there is no account of the production of any Italian opera on our stage till many years afterwards. Italian music, as Burney observes, was long talked of and performed in England before we heard of Italian singing. Even in the time of Queen Elizabeth, the works of the great Italian madrigalists were well known to our amateurs as well as composers: and Purcell, as we have seen, studied the Italian vocal music of his time. But we do not hear of the arrival of Italian singers till about the close of the seventeenth century. In 1692, an advertisement in the London Gazette announces that "the Italian lady, that is lately come over, that is so famous for singing," will sing at the concerts in York-buildings during the season. In April, 1693, Signor Tosi, the author of the celebrated treatise on singing, advertises a concert: and, from that time, the announcements of concerts by Italian performers became frequent.

The "Italian lady," announced in 1692 as

being so famous for her singing, was FRANCESCA MARGHERITA de l'EPINE, the first Italian singer of any note who appeared in England. She came to this country with a German musician, of the name of Greber; and hence we find her, in some of the musical squibs of the day, called "Greber's Peg." She sang in Italian operas, and at concerts and other musical entertainments, till the year 1718, when she retired, and married the celebrated Dr. Pepusch. She was an excellent musician; being not only an accomplished singer, but an extraordinary performer on the harpsichord. She was so swarthy and ill-favoured that her husband used to call her Hecate, a name to which she answered with perfect good-humour; but her want of personal charms did not prevent her from enjoying the uninterrupted favour of the public. By her marriage with Dr. Pepusch she brought him a fortune of 10,000*l.*; a sum which, by relieving him from the daily cares and toils of his profession, enabled him to follow his favourite pursuit of learned researches into the history and antiquities of his art. She was a person of perfect respectability; but, nevertheless, was unceremoniously treated by some of the writers of the day, who had no love for foreign players and musicians. She had a sister, who came to England in 1703; and these ladies are thus mentioned by Swift in his Journal to Stella: "August 6, 1711. We have a music-meeting in our town (Windsor) to-night.

I went to the rehearsal of it, and there was *Margarita*, and her sister, and another drab, and a parcel of fiddlers. I was weary, and would not go to the meeting, which I am sorry for, because I heard it was a great assembly." The dean frequently speaks of the music-meetings at Windsor in the course of this season; always with spleen and an affectation of contempt; saying, for example, "In half an hour I was tired of their *fine stuff*," and so on: merely showing how little even a great man can make himself by talking flippantly of what he does not understand.

In the year 1703, we first hear of the celebrated Mrs. Tofts, who is mentioned in advertisements of the day, as singing English and Italian songs, at the theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields. This lady became the rival of Margherita de l'Epine; and their competition gave rise to the first musical feud that we read of in England. The public was divided into an Italian and English party; the one composed of the partisans of Margherita, the other of the admirers of Mrs. Tofts. The spirit of faction appears to have run high among the amateurs, both high and low. When Margherita made her appearance at Drury-lane, there was a disturbance in the theatre while she was singing, which was supposed to have been created by the emissaries of Mrs. Tofts; a supposition which derived some colour from the circumstance that her own female servant was a ringleader in the uproar. In her

own vindication, however, Mrs. Tofts had the following paragraph inserted in the *Daily Courant* of February 8, 1704 :—

" Ann Barwick having occasioned a disturbance at the theatre-royal Drury-lane, on Saturday night last, the 5th of February, and being thereupon taken into custody, Mrs. Tofts, in vindication of her innocency, sent a letter to Mr. Rich, master of the said theatre, which is as followeth :—'Sir, I was very much surprised when I was informed that Ann Barwick, who was lately my servant, had committed a rudeness last night at the playhouse, by throwing of oranges and hissing when Mrs. L'Epine, the Italian gentlewoman, sung. I hope no one will think that it was in the least with my privity, as I assure you it was not. I abhor such practices; and I hope you will cause her to be prosecuted, that she may be punished as she deserves. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

'KATHARINE TOFTS.'"

The musical feuds among the aristocracy, to which the rivalry of the British and foreign songstresses gave rise, are thus alluded to by Hughes, the author of the Siege of Damascus ;

> " Music has learn'd the discords of the state,
> And concerts jar with whig and tory hate.
> Here Somerset and Devonshire attend
> The British Tofts, and every note commend ;
> To native merit just, and pleas'd to see
> We've Roman hearts, from Roman bondage free.

There famed L'Epine does equal skill employ,
While listening peers crowd to the ecstatic joy:
Bedford to hear her song his dice forsakes;
And Nottingham is raptured when she shakes.
Lull'd statesmen melt away their drowsy cares,
Of England's safety, in Italian airs."

The actual introduction of the Italian opera into England was preceded by adaptations of Italian pieces to the English stage. The first of these was *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus*, a translation of an opera then popular in Italy, with music composed for the English words, by Thomas Clayton, a composer whose name has acquired an unmerited celebrity from his connexion with Addison. Clayton had been in Italy; and, though destitute of genius, laid claim to the character of a reformer of the English musical drama, and talked so big that he contrived to persuade the public of his capacity for the task. In the preface to the book of the words of this opera, he thus sets forth its pretensions. "The design of this entertainment being to introduce the Italian manner of singing to the English stage, which has not been before attempted, I was obliged to have an Italian opera translated; in which the words, however mean in several places, suited much better with that manner of music than others more poetical would do. The style of this music is to express the passions, which is the soul of music; and though the voices are not equal to the Italian, yet I have engaged the best that were to be found in England; and I have not been wanting, to the

utmost of my diligence, in the instructing of them. The music, being recitative, may not at first meet with that general acceptation, as is to be hoped for, from the audience's being better acquainted with it; but if this attempt shall be a means of bringing this manner of music to be used in my native country, I shall think my study and pains very well employed."

This opera was first performed at Drury-lane, on the 16th of January, 1705. The singers were all English, consisting of Mrs. Tofts, Mrs. Cross, and Mrs. Lyndsay, with Messrs. Hughes, Leveridge, and Cook. At this time Signora de l'Epine sang Italian songs before or after the opera. The music, as well as the words, of this piece were utterly contemptible; yet such was the charm of novelty, and so effectually had Clayton persuaded the public that he was a great man, that this worthless production was performed twenty-four times the first season, and eleven times the second.*

* Though *Arsinoe* is utterly unworthy of criticism, yet there is something amusing in the folly of the composer. The very first song may be taken as a specimen. The words are:

"Queen of Darkness, sable Night,
Ease a wandering lover's pain;
Guide me, lead me,
Where the nymph whom I adore,
Sleeping, dreaming,
Thinks of love and me no more."

The first two lines are spoken in a meagre sort of recitative. Then there is a miserable air, the first part of which consists of the next two lines, and concludes with a perfect close. The

The next opera after the Italian manner was *Camilla*, performed for the first time at Drury-lane, on the 30th of April, 1706. It was translated from the Italian of Silvio Stampiglio, by Owen M'Swiney, a person who was for some time manager of that theatre, and the English words were adapted to the original music of Marc Antonio Buononcini, the brother of Giovanni Buononcini, the celebrated rival of Handel. It was performed by the same company as *Arsinoe*, and met with great success; having been frequently performed, alternately with *Arsinoe*, and *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia*, another opera of the same kind, till a change in the taste of the town was effected by the arrival of the first Italian dramatic singers.

These were Valentini Urbani, and a lady known only by the name of the Baroness, a native of Germany, who had been educated in Italy, and had acquired a considerable reputation on the continent. Along with them, Signora de l'Epine was engaged at Drury-lane; and then the opera of *Camilla* was performed half in English and half in Italian; the English singers, as formerly, making use of the translation, while the Italians performed their parts in the original language. The part of *Camilla*, the

second part of the air is on the last two lines; after which there is, as usual, a *da capo*, and the first part is repeated; the song finishing in the middle of a sentence—

"Guide me, lead me,
Where the nymph whom I adore!"

heroine, continued to be performed by Mrs. Tofts, in English, while Valentini enacted *Turnus* in Italian. This absurdity was ridiculed by the wits of the day, but passed current with the public, who looked upon it as one of those conventional licenses which must always, to a greater or smaller extent, be tolerated in dramatic performances. It was an absurdity not peculiar to England; for Riccoboni says, that, when Italian operas were first performed at Hamburg, the recitative was delivered in the German language, and the airs generally sung in Italian.

The music of *Camilla* has considerable merit. The airs are very short, consisting of two parts, (the second of which is almost always in the relative minor key,) and ending with a repetition of the first part. This form was adhered to, in defiance of sense and meaning, by every dramatic composer, for the best part of a century, till it was got rid of by Gluck and Piccini. The melodies exhibit invention and expression, and are accompanied by solid and ingenious basses. The song in the part of *Turnus*, "Frail are a lover's hopes," has many strokes of feeling, and would please the most modern ear. The air, "Fortune ever known to vary," sung by Mrs. Tofts, contains a number of passages in triplets, each triplet being sung to a syllable, exactly in the manner of Rossini. The air,—

"I was born of a royal race,
Yet must wander in disgrace,"

sung by Mrs. Tofts in the opening of the piece, consists of only *fourteen bars;* and yet there is so much meaning in these few notes, that it is easy to conceive the effect which Mrs. Tofts is said to have produced in singing them.

This lady acquired great celebrity by her performance of the character of *Camilla.* There is a pleasant allusion to it in the *Spectator*, in the form of a letter from the actor who personated the wild boar killed by the amazonian heroine. "Mr. Spectator," says this correspondent, "your having been so humble as to take notice of the epistles of other animals, emboldens me, who am the wild boar that was killed by Mrs. Tofts, to represent to you, that I think I was hardly used in not having the part of the lion in *Hydaspes* given to me. It would have been but a natural step for me to have personated that noble creature, after having behaved myself to satisfaction in the part above mentioned: but that of a lion is too great a character for one that never trode the stage before but upon two legs. As for the little resistance which I made, I hope it may be excused, when it is considered that the dart was thrown at me by so fair a hand. I must confess I had but just put on my brutality; and *Camilla's* charms were such, that beholding her erect mien, hearing her charming voice, and astonished with her grateful motion, I could not keep up to my assumed fierceness, but died like a man."

Mrs. Tofts retired from the stage in 1709. Cibber, who speaks of her from his own knowledge, says, "Whatever defect the fashionably skilful might find in her manner, she had, in the general sense of her hearers, charms that few of the most learned singers ever arrive at."—"The beauty," he adds, "of her finely proportioned figure, and exquisitely sweet, silver tone of voice, with peculiar rapid swiftness of her throat, were perfections not to be imitated by art or labour." It appears from the music of the operas in which she performed, that her voice was a *soprano* of moderate compass, and that her passages of execution were by no means either various or difficult.

Her retirement from the stage was caused by a mental malady, under the influence of which she imagined herself to be some one or other of the characters she represented. This calamity is unfeelingly alluded to by Steele, in the *Tatler*.* After saying, that "the theatre is breaking," and that "there is a great desolation among the gentlemen and ladies who were the ornaments of the town and used to shine in plumes and diadems, the heroes being most of them pressed and the queens beating hemp," the writer adds, "The great revolutions of this nature bring to my mind the distresses of the unfortunate *Camilla*, who has had the ill luck to break before her voice, and to disappear at a time when her beauty was in the

* No. 20, May 26th, 1709.

height of its bloom. This lady entered so thoroughly into the great characters she acted, that when she had finished her part she could not think of retrenching her equipage, but would appear in her own lodgings with the same magnificence as she did upon the stage. This greatness of soul has reduced that unhappy princess to a voluntary retirement, where she now passes her time among the woods and forests, thinking on the crowns and sceptres she has lost, and often humming over in her solitude,

> "I was born of royal race,
> Yet must wander in disgracc," &c.

But for fear of being overheard, and her quality known, she usually sings it in Italian ;

> "Nacqui al regno, nacqui al trono,
> E pur sono
> Sventurata pastorella."

Burney says, that it seems doubtful whether we are to take this account literally, and refers his readers to the *Tatler*, leaving the comments to their own ingenuity. But there is no doubt that Steele alluded to the state of insanity under which she then laboured, and into which, though she recovered from it for a time, she again fell in the latter period of her life. "In the meridian of her beauty," says Hawkins, "and possessed of a large sum of money which she had acquired by singing, Mrs. Tofts quitted the stage, and was married to Mr. Joseph Smith, a gentleman, who

being appointed consul for the English nation at Venice, she went thither with him. Mr. Smith was a great collector of books and patron of the arts. He lived in great state and magnificence; but the disorder of his wife returning, she dwelt sequestered from the world in a remote part of the house, and had a large garden to range in, in which she would frequently walk, singing, and giving way to that innocent frenzy which had seized her in the earlier part of her life." In this unhappy state she continued many years, and died about 1760.*

The favour with which the public received these importations from the Italian stage, induced Addison to undertake an opera in the same style, but entirely of English workmanship. He accordingly wrote his celebrated *Rosamond:* but unfortunately partook so much of the general delusion as to commit the composition of the music to the worthless pretender Clayton. It was performed for the first time on the 4th of March, 1707. The part of *Queen Eleanor*

* In the French translation of the *Tatler*, there is the following note. "La célébre Madame Tofts, après avoir brillé par la douceur et la beauté de sa voix, eut, je ne sais pas comment, la mortification de se voir negligée avant que d'avoir perdu les agrémens qui la rendaient si fameuse. De chagrin, elle prit la résolution d'aller à Rome, où l'on dit qu'elle se fit Papiste. Le Pape Clement XI., devant qui elle chanta, fut charmé de sa voix, et la chronique scandaleuse en publia même quelque chose de plus." No authority, however, is given for this piece of scandal.

was performed by Mrs. Tofts; *Rosamond*, by Signora Maria Gallia, a singer of whom we have not met with any account; the *King*, by Mr. Hughes; and the two comic characters, *Sir Trusty* and *Grideline*, by Mr. Leveridge and Mrs. Lyndsay. Notwithstanding the favourable prepossessions of the public, and the poetical merit of the piece, it was received with the utmost coldness, and struggled with difficulty through three representations. It was then laid aside, and never again performed in the lifetime of the author; though it was revived thirty years afterwards, with new music by Dr. Arne.

Rosamond is a very pleasing dramatic poem, though it cannot be called a good opera. It is better calculated for reading than for representation. Its versification is polished and elegant, containing many lively and graceful turns of expression, poetical thoughts, and touches of tenderness. But it lacks dramatic action and movement; and the interest of the story is made to terminate long before the conclusion of the piece, the latter part of which is spun out by forced and clumsy buffoonery, and by a tissue of fulsome compliments to the Duke of Marlborough, which would not now be tolerated, but were considered as matters of course in an age when men of the highest literary distinction were not ashamed to pay their court to the great by the grossest adulation. *Rosamond* owed its failure in a great measure to the worthlessness of Clayton's music, which the audience were now

able to compare with better things : but the defects of the drama must also be taken into account ; for even when it was afterwards performed with the pretty music of Arne, it was unable to acquire a permanent hold of the public favour. Addison's mortification at this ill success appears to have been the cause of the constant hostility he ever afterwards exhibited to the Italian opera.

The year 1708 was rendered memorable by the arrival of the celebrated Cavaliere NICOLINO GRIMALDI, generally known by the name of NICOLINI. This distinguished performer was a Neapolitan ; and is classed by Quadrio among the great singers who began to appear between 1690 and 1700. He had acquired a high reputation at Venice, Milan, and other cities of Italy where the musical drama was established, when he was attracted to England (according to Cibber) by the report of our passion for foreign operas, without any particular invitation or engagement.

The first opera in which Nicolini appeared was *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, a translation of the *Pirro e Demetrio* of Adriano Morselli, first performed at Naples, with the music of Alessandro Scarlatti, in 1694. The translation was executed by Mac Swiney, the manager, and the music was arranged to the English words by Nicola Haym, a composer of some merit, then resident in London, who composed a new overture and several additional airs. It was performed, for the first time, on the 14th of

December, 1708, and continued for a long time to draw crowded audiences. The performers were a mixture of Italians and English, who acted and sang in their respective languages: the Italians being Nicolini, Valentini, Margherita de l'Epine, and the Baroness; and the English, Mrs. Tofts, Mr. Cook, and Mr. Ramondon. The airs of this opera are in general excellent. Many of them are deformed, of course, by antiquated divisions; but others are in that pure and simple style which will always please; and it is only doing justice to Haym to say that the airs added by him are not inferior to those of the more celebrated author of the original music.

The successful representation of this opera produced the following remarks from Sir Richard Steele, in the fourth number of the *Tatler*.— "Letters from the Haymarket inform us that on Saturday night last the opera of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* was performed with great applause. This intelligence is not very acceptable to us friends of the theatre; for the stage being an entertainment of the reason and all our faculties, this way of being pleased with the suspense of them for three hours together, and being given up to the shallow satisfaction of the ears and eyes only, seems to arise rather from the degeneracy of our understanding than an improvement of our diversions. That the understanding has no part in the pleasure is evident from what these letters very positively assert;

to wit, that a great part of the performance was done in Italian: and a great critic fell into fits in the gallery at seeing not only time and place, but language and nations, confused in the most incorrigible manner. His spleen is so extremely moved on this occasion, that he is going to publish another treatise against the introduction of operas, which, he thinks, has already inclined us to thoughts of peace, and, if tolerated, must infallibly dispirit us from carrying on the war. He has communicated his scheme to the whole room, and declared in what manner things of this kind were first introduced. He has on this occasion considered the nature of sounds in general, and made a very elaborate digression upon the London cries, wherein he has shown, from reason and philosophy, why oysters are cried, card-matches sung, and turnips and all other vegetables neither cried, sung, nor said, but sold with an accent and tone neither natural to man nor beast." Notwithstanding Steele's propensity, however, to indulge his satirical vein at the expense of the Italian opera, he afterwards admits *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* to be "a noble entertainment," and pays a tribute to the talents of Nicolini.* "For my own part," he says, "I was fully satisfied with the sight of an actor, who, by the grace and propriety of his action and gesture, does honour to the human figure. Every one will imagine I mean Signor Nicolini,

* Tatler, No. 113.

who sets off the character he bears in an opera by his action, as much as he does the words of it by his voice. Every limb and every finger contributes to the part he acts, inasmuch that a deaf man may go along with him in the sense of it. There is scarce a beautiful posture in an old statue which he does not plant himself in, as the different circumstances of the story give occasion for it. He performs the most ordinary action in a manner suitable to the greatness of his character, and shows the prince even in the giving of a letter, or despatching of a messenger." "Our best actors," he adds, "are somewhat at a loss to support themselves with proper gesture, as they move from any considerable distance to the front of the stage; but I have seen the person of whom I am now speaking enter alone at the remotest part of it, and advance from it with such greatness of air and mien as seemed to fill the stage, and, at the same time, commanded the attention of the audience with the majesty of his appearance." The two passages just quoted are very inconsistent with each other. That the understanding had no share in the pleasure derived from the Italian opera could not be said of an entertainment in which, by Steele's own account, so much intellectual gratification was produced by the noble performance of Nicolini. But Steele's fine taste and excellent sense were warped, on this subject, by his feelings of personal interest; for he

was a patentee of an English theatre, and was suffering from the successful rivalry of the Italian opera.

Pyrrhus and Demetrius was the last opera which was performed partly in Italian and partly in English. From that time Italian operas, performed entirely in their original form, completely engrossed the musical stage. The English singers disappeared, and the English opera, for a time, was in abeyance. Mrs. Tofts, as has been already mentioned, retired in 1709; and Mr. Hughes, who had performed principal parts in the Anglo-Italian operas, is no more heard of after this period. Leveridge, who, from Purcell's time, had been an eminent dramatic singer, appears also, at this time, to have been deprived of his occupation. Leveridge had acquired some reputation as a composer as well as a singer. In 1699 he appeared at Drury Lane in an opera called the *Island Princess*, composed jointly by Daniel Purcell, Jeremiah Clarke, and himself. When operas in the Italian style were introduced, he had a part in all of them, as long as the English performers were allowed to sing in their own language. After this he sang in pantomimes, at the theatres in Lincoln's Inn Fields and Covent Garden, till after the middle of the last century, when he was more than eighty years old. "I remember," says Dr. Burney, "his singing 'Ghosts of every occupation,' and several of Purcell's bass songs, occasionally, in a style which forty

years ago seemed antediluvian ; but as he generally was the representative of Pluto, Neptune, or some ancient divinity, it corresponded perfectly with his figure and character. He was not only a celebrated singer of convivial songs, but the writer and composer of many that were in great favour with singers and hearers of a certain class, who more piously performed the rites of Comus and Bacchus than those of Minerva and Apollo. He quitted this sublunary world in 1758, at eighty-eight years of age."

In the *Tatler* of January 30, 1710, there is a satire on the Italian opera, in the form of a letter from Penkethman, the manager of the puppet-show, which contains some witty allusions to the manner in which operas were then performed.

"'Tis well known," Penkethman is made to say, "it has been my constant endeavour to furnish the town with agreeable amusements, both in my present performances on the theatre, and in other undertakings of different kinds: for which reason I have been contented to suffer so much persecution on the British stage, and so often submitted myself to the severities of whips, cudgels, canes, and the like instruments of correction ; and likewise, during the vacation of dramatic representations last summer, I erected a booth at Greenwich, that the quality and gentry might at the same time receive the diversion of a play and the benefit of the air. The last effort I have made, is that surprising

machine, or moving picture, which goes under the denomination of the Pantheon, and has given general satisfaction to all such as have had the curiosity to see it. This my new invented opera is already so well adapted to general purposes, that it is capable of representing at once a hundred curious figures, with all the proper movements and gestures that are necessary to make an impression on the imagination. But whereas the strength of the nation's genius is such, that it does not wholly terminate in dumb show and outward magnificence, but extends even to sound, not offended *sometimes* with a little mixture of sense, provided it be sparingly introduced, I have contrived a method to introduce music into my operations. Thus shall the auditors be entertained with *trills*, *quavers*, and *divisions*, in greater perfection than has been ever yet known, which advantage will arise from a certain fineness and tenuity of the vocal organs, peculiar to my own players. They shall beat the air with *crotchets*, heroically expire in *fugues*, brandish their arms through the passive *vacuum*, and *fly away upon the musical wings of the wind.* But what is still more extraordinary, I resolve not to put the audience to the silly unnecessary trouble of understanding what they hear. Nothing vulgar, nothing English, shall be admitted; but the drama consist wholly of foreign airs and tunes, with such decorations as are proper to any country but our own. My *Nicolini* (for you must permit me at

present to make use of the commonly received names, my correspondent at Venice, having promised to furnish me as soon as he is able with a set of the finest that can be collected from all parts abroad,) shall bemoan the cruelty of his stars and mistress in *soothing Gothic;* my *Valentini* shall answer him most canorously in *High Dutch;* my Leveridge shall grumble harsh *Hebrew gutturals* in a passion, and *Lynzeiana** squeak out pig-notes from behind the curtain.

"In order to prevent a thing that has been more than once laughed at in operas, I had some intention of obliging, if I could, (by a certain magic,) all the necessary letters to sing and deliver themselves; but this I am afraid will be found impracticable. There are, however, other things which are capable of being remedied. The Italian operas, so much in request at present, do not seem to come up to the main end of such representations; the gestures of the actors are often fantastic and whimsical. My moving figures, therefore, shall use their arms and legs with more dignity and decorum, and set one foot before another with such exactness as can only be excelled by nature itself. The argument their drama is founded on is too low, being usually the story of a demi-hero, personated by a demi-man. This shall take in the transactions of gods and goddesses, complete heroes and heroines. Further, I can so order and regulate

* Mrs. Lyndsay.

the various movements, as either to make them represent a set of worshipful benchers in their annual merriments and dances, or our militia warriors in their furious domestic exercises. But what crowns all is, that this my entertainment may be seen without loss of time or business, and for a very moderate expense: nor can there be any interruption or disappointment in the performance, since neither my heroes can be in any danger of losing their voices, nor my heroines of being ravished or taken from me. I intend, for the convenience of middling and ordinary people, to frame another machine of the same nature as this, and in the same perfection, but of a size that may be easily conveyed into a small portable vehicle made for that purpose; and this shall be called the *Pantheon Itinerant*, that so those whose circumstances will not permit them to come up to the price of a shilling, may be entertained with a complete opera for a halfpenny, either in their own houses or the street.

"My humble request to your worship is, that you would be pleased to display, in that light you are able, the perfection and excellence of my pantheon, as well itinerant as fixed, and show how far the British opera is superior to the Italian."

The first opera performed entirely in Italian was *Almahide*, supposed to be the composition of Buononcini. It appeared in January 1710, and was received with favour. The singers were Valentini, Nicolini, Margherita de l'Epine, Cassani,

and Isabella Girardeau, called Signora Isabella. The music is fuller of divisions and feats of execution, in the airs for the principal singers, than that of any of the previous operas; but it is not remarkable on any other account.

In the same year, *Hydaspes*, composed by Francesco Mancini, was brought on the stage by Nicolini, who performed the principal character. The other performers were the same as in *Almahide*, with the addition of Lawrence, a tenor singer of some ability, who had knowledge enough of Italian to perform an inferior part in it.

Hydaspes, as a drama, contains many puerilities, and possesses less musical merit than several operas which preceded it. Its success, however, was very great; and indeed, for a time, it was quite the rage in the fashionable world.

The combat between Hydaspes and the lion was a favourite subject for satire among the wits of the day. The following is the passage containing this famous combat, in the original, and with the translation. It must be premised that Hydaspes is the brother of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, and his rival in the love of the Princess Berenice. Falling into the tyrant's power, he is condemned to be devoured by a lion in the public amphitheatre, and in the presence of his mistress. The third act opens with a scene representing the amphitheatre, filled with a crowd of spectators. Hydaspes is brought in, guarded by soldiers; a tender dialogue between

him and Berenice is broken off by the sound of a trumpet.

" *Idaspe.* Vado a morir, o cara!
Berenice. Ti lascio, idolo mio!
Idas. Berenice, mio bene!
Ber. Idaspe!
Idas. } Addio!
Ber. }

[*Berenice si và a sedere sopra li scalini dell' anfiteatro, così Arbace, e li soldati, restando solo Idaspe nell' arena. Dopo di che, viene sprigionato un leone, quale non accortosi a prima vista d'Idaspe và passeggiando lentamente il teatro, e guardando gli spettatori; intanto Idaspe.*

Idas. Mostro crudel, che fai?
Vieni col tuo rigore
A lacerarmi il sen?
Ma non toccare il core,
Il cor, che gia serbai
Fedele al caro ben.

[*Il leone accortosi d'Idaspe, se gli avvanza furioso.*

Ber. Ahime, misera, io moro!

[*Berenice sviene; nel mentre Idaspe, afferrato il leone con le braccia nel collo, lo affoga, e cade finalmente a terra, ponendogli esso un piede sul collo in segno di vittoria.*

Idas. Evvi altro nemico
Con cui pugnar io deggia?
De novelli cimenti
Non è quest' alma schiava.

Il popolo. Viva, Idaspe, viva, viva!

[*Al romore rivicne dallo svenimento Berenice che crede Idaspe morto.*

Ber. Ed ancor vivo, e spiro!
Ah, ben conosco, ahi lassa,
Che non uccide il duolo.

[*S'accorge ch' Idaspe è vivo.*

Ma che rimiro, oh Dio, Idaspe è vivo!

[*Discende frettolosa nell' arena, giunta vicina ad Idaspe.*

Due volte, o caro sposo
Morto ti piansi, e vivo ancor t'abbracio.
Idas. Vivo, merce di Numi,
Abbattuto il furor di cruda fera."

"*Hydaspes.* For thee, my life, I die.
Berenice. O my soul! a long farewell!
Hydas. Ah, Berenice! my love!
Ber. Hydaspes!
Hydas. } Oh! farewell!
Ber. }

[*Berenice places herself on the steps of the amphitheatre, with Arbaces and the soldiers: Hydaspes remaining alone in the arena; after which a lion comes out of his den, which, not yet seeing Hydaspes, stalks about looking at the spectators.*

Hydas. Why dost thou, horrid monster, pause?
Come on; now sate thy ravenous jaws;
This naked bosom tear;
But thou within shalt find a heart
Guarded by flames will make thee start,
And turn thy rage to fear.*

[*The lion, seeing Hydaspes, flies furiously on him.*

Ber. Ah, miserable me! I die!

[*Berenice faints. Hydaspes, grasping the lion's neck with his arms, strangles him, when falling at last on the ground, he sets his foot on his neck in sign of victory.*

Hydas. Is there another monster yet
Remains for me t'encounter?
No force that's new
This fear can e'er subdue.

The People. Live, live, Hydaspes, live!

[*After the shout, Berenice recovers, supposing Hydaspes dead.*

Ber. Still do I live and breathe!
Alas, too well! Ah, wretched life!
Which woes like mine can't yet destroy.

* This is a *free* translation, with a vengeance.

But what, ye powers, do I behold?
Hydaspes living!

[*Perceiving Hydaspes living, she comes down in haste, and runs to him.*

Now twice, my dearest love,
Have I bemoan'd thy death, and still thus hold thee living!
Hydas. Thanks to the gods, I live,
That rais'd this arm to crush the royal beast."

This scene must have had a most whimsical effect on the stage. Hydaspes addresses the lion in a long bravura song, "Mostro crudel che fai?" full of divisions and flourishes; first calling on the "cruel monster," in a tone of defiance, to come on, and then telling him, with a sentimental air, and in a *largo* movement in the minor key, that he may tear his bosom, but shall not touch his heart, which he has kept faithful to his beloved. The exhibition of Nicolini, alternately vapouring and gesticulating to a poor biped in a lion's skin, then breathing a love-tale in the pseudo-monster's ear, and at last fairly throttling him on the stage, must have been ludicrous in the extreme, and sufficient to throw ridicule on the Italian opera.

The thirteenth number of the *Spectator* is an admirable *jeu d'esprit* on the subject of Nicolini's combat with the lion, "which," says Addison, "has been very often exhibited to the general satisfaction of most of the nobility and gentry in the kingdom of Great Britain." After a playful imaginary description of the various representatives of the lion, the *Spectator* concludes in a more serious

strain: "I would not be thought," he says, "in any part of this relation, to reflect upon Signor Nicolini, who in acting this part only complies with the wretched taste of his audience. He knows very well that the lion has many more admirers than himself; as they say of the famous equestrian statue on the Pont Neuf at Paris, that more people go to see the horse than the king who sits upon it. On the contrary, it gives me a just indignation to see a person whose action gives new dignity to kings, resolution to heroes, and softness to lovers, thus sinking from the greatness of his behaviour, and degraded into the character of *The London Prentice*. I have often wished that our tragedians would copy after this great master in action. Could they make the same use of their arms and legs, and inform their faces with as significant looks and passions, how glorious would an English tragedy appear with that action which is capable of giving a dignity to the forced thoughts, cold conceits, and unnatural expressions of an Italian opera: in the mean time I have related this combat of the lion, to show what are at present the reigning entertainments of the politer part of Great Britain. Audiences have often been reproached by writers for the coarseness of their taste; but our present grievance does not seem to be the want of a good taste, but of common sense."

In another number* of the same journal, there

* No. 314.

are some keen strokes of satire in a letter from "Toby Rent-free."—"You are to know," says this correspondent, "that I am naturally brave, and love fighting as well as any man in England. This gallant temper of mine makes me extremely delighted with battles on the stage. I give you this trouble to complain to you, that Nicolini refused to gratify me in that part of the opera for which I have most taste. I observe it is become a custom, that whenever any gentlemen are particularly pleased with a song, at their crying out *encore* or *altro volto*, the performer is so obliging as to sing it over again. I was at the opera the last time *Hydaspes* was performed. At that part of it where the hero engages with the lion, the graceful manner in which he put that terrible monster to death gave me so great a pleasure, and at the same time so just a sense of that gentleman's intrepidity and conduct, that I could not forbear desiring a repetition of it, by crying out *altro volto* in a very audible voice; and my friends flatter me that I pronounced those words with a tolerably good accent, considering that this was but the third opera I had ever seen in my life. Yet, notwithstanding all this, there was so little regard had to me, that the lion was carried off and went to bed without being killed any more that night. Now, Sir, pray consider that I did not understand a word of what Mr. Nicolini said to this cruel creature; besides, I have no ear for music; so that during the long dispute between them, the

whole entertainment I had was from my eyes. Why then have I not as much right to have a graceful action repeated as another has a pleasing sound, since he only hears as I see, and we neither of us know that there is any reasonable thing a doing? Pray, Sir, settle the business of this claim in the audience, and let us know when we may cry *altro volto*, *anglicè*, *again*, *again*, for the future. I am an Englishman, and expect some reason or other to be given me, and perhaps an ordinary one may serve; but I expect an answer." In another paper a foolish projector is introduced, entertaining a coffee-house audience with a proposal for an opera of a new species, caricaturing, of course, all the absurdities laid to the charge of the fashionable amusement. The opera is to be entitled, *The Expedition of Alexander the Great;* and the projector gives a humorous account of the way in which he intends to dispose of all the remarkable shows about town among the scenes and decorations of the piece. "This project," continues the *Spectator*, "was received with very great applause by the whole table. Upon which the undertaker told us that he had not communicated to us above half his design; for that, Alexander being a Greek, it was his intention that the whole opera should be acted in that language, which was a tongue he was sure would wonderfully please the ladies, especially when it was a little raised and rounded by the Ionic dialect; and could not but be acceptable to the whole audience, *because*

there are fewer of them who understand Greek than Italian. The only difficulty that remained was how to get performers, unless we could persuade some gentlemen of the universities to learn to sing, in order to qualify themselves for the stage; but this objection soon vanished, when the projector informed us that the Greeks were at present the only musicians in the Turkish empire, and that it would be very easy for our factory at Smyrna to furnish us every year with a colony of musicians by the opportunity of the Turkey fleet; besides, says he, if we want any single voice for any lower part in the opera, Lawrence can learn to speak Greek, *as well as he does Italian,* in a fortnight's time."

CHAPTER XII.

Arrival of Handel in England—*Rinaldo*—Addison's opinions respecting the Italian opera, and observations on them.

Such was the state of the Italian opera when Handel arrived in England, towards the end of the year 1710. This illustrious musician was then in the twenty-seventh year of his age, and had already acquired a high reputation, both in Germany and Italy, as a dramatic composer. He came to England upon the invitation of several noblemen with whom he had become acquainted at the court of Hanover, where he then resided, and on a temporary leave of absence from the elector, afterwards George the First.

The theatre in the Haymarket was at this time under the management of Aaron Hill, who, hearing of the arrival of so great a musician, immediately applied to him to compose an opera. Handel having consented, Hill sketched out the plan of a drama, taking the subject from the famous episode of Rinaldo and Armida in Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered; and the piece was written by Rossi, a poet

of considerable merit, who afterwards produced several other dramas for the opera stage. In an advertisement prefixed to the *libretto*, the poet says that the composer proceeded so rapidly as hardly to allow him time to write; and that the music of the opera was produced in a fortnight.

Rinaldo appeared for the first time on the 24th of February 1711. The romantic interest of the subject, the charms of the music, and the splendour of the spectacle, made it an object of general attraction; and it was performed to crowded audiences, without interruption, to the end of the season. This extraordinary success appears to have induced Addison to write down, if possible, the Italian opera, on which, since the fate of his own *Rosamond*, he looked with an evil eye. Accordingly the *Spectator*, then newly established, contains a series of attacks, in rapid succession, on the Italian stage in general, and on the favourite opera in particular, in which this delightful writer employs alternately playful raillery, cutting sarcasm, and grave remonstrance. Notwithstanding the influence which the *Spectator* exercised over the taste and manners of the age, its attacks on the Italian opera seem to have had little effect in turning the public from an entertainment which, in spite of the absurdities (partly with justice) laid to its charge, they found delightful. People laughed with the *Spectator*, but still flocked to see *Rinaldo*.

What Addison has said on this subject, however,

is worthy of attention, even at the distance of more than a century. He wrote under the influence of spleen and jealousy; but the shafts of his wit are frequently pointed by its justice; and he had too much perspicacity of judgment to be entirely in the wrong, even where he was, in some measure, blinded by prejudice.

On the 6th of March, ten days after the first performance of *Rinaldo*, the fifth number of the *Spectator* contained an article on the opera. The absurdities introduced into the *spectacle* are ridiculed in the first place. "An opera," says Addison, "may be allowed to be extravagantly lavish in its decorations, as its only design is to gratify the senses, and keep up an indolent attention in the audience. Common sense, however, requires that there should be nothing in the scenes and machines which may appear childish and absurd. How would the wits of king Charles's time have laughed to have seen Nicolini exposed to a tempest in robes of ermine, and sailing in an open boat upon a sea of pasteboard! What a field of raillery would they have been let into, had they been entertained with painted dragons spitting wildfire, enchanted chariots drawn by Flanders mares, and real cascades in artificial landscapes! A little skill in criticism would inform us, that shadows and realities ought not to be mixed together in the same piece; and that the scenes which are designed as the representations of nature should be filled with resemblances, and not with the

things themselves. If one would represent a wide champaign country filled with herds and flocks, it would be ridiculous to draw the country only upon the scenes, and to crowd several parts of the stage with sheep and oxen. This is joining together inconsistencies, and making the decoration partly real and partly imaginary. I would recommend what I have said here, to the directors as well as to the admirers of our modern opera." This passage might be recommended, too, to the directors of *our* modern opera; for it contains the true principle of stage-decoration, which is still too often lost sight of. The writer goes on to give an amusing instance of the absurdity he reprehends. "As I was walking in the streets about a fortnight ago, I saw an ordinary fellow carrying a cage full of little birds upon his shoulders; and as I was wondering with myself what use he would put them to, he was met very luckily by an acquaintance who had the same curiosity. Upon his asking him what he had upon his shoulders, he told him that he had been buying sparrows for the opera. 'Sparrows for the opera!' says his friend, licking his lips,—'what, are they to be roasted?' 'No, no,' says the other, 'they are to enter towards the end of the first act, and to fly about the stage.' This strange dialogue awakened my curiosity so far, that I immediately bought the opera, by which means I perceived that the sparrows were to act the part of singing birds in a delightful grove: though, upon a nearer inquiry, I found the

sparrows put the same trick upon the audience that Sir Martin Mar-all practised upon his mistress: for, though they flew in sight, the music proceeded from a consort of flageolets and bird-calls, which were planted behind the scenes." This ridiculous way of imitating nature was actually attempted in *Rinaldo*, in the scene in which the heroine, Almirena, wandering amid the enchanted groves of Armida, calls upon the feathered songsters, and the breezes which murmur around, to tell her of her absent lover—

> " Augelletti che cantate,
> Zeffiretti che spirate,
> Aure dolce intorno a me,
> Il mio ben dite dov' è."

This charming song is introduced, in the original score, by a long symphony of twenty bars for octave flutes, in imitation of birds, which is not inserted in the printed music, but its place is merely indicated by a mark of twenty bars rest. During the performance of this symphony, the sparrows were let loose, and flew about the stage—real birds among painted groves.

But Addison is not so just or so successful when he proceeds to attack the dramatist and the composer. " To give you a taste," he says, " of the poet after the conjuror, I shall give you a taste of the Italian from the first lines of his preface. *Eccoti, benigno lettore, un parto di poche sere; che se ben nato di notte, non è però aborto di tenebre, mà*

si farà conoscere figlio d'Apollo con qualche raggio di Parnasso. Behold, gentle reader, the birth of a few evenings, which, though it be the offspring of the night, is not the abortion of darkness, but will make itself known to be the son of Apollo, with a certain ray of Parnassus. He afterwards proceeds to call Mynheer Handel the Orpheus of our age, and to acquaint us, in the same sublimity of style, that he composed this opera in a fortnight. Such are the wits to whose tastes we so ambitiously conform ourselves. The truth of it is, the finest writers among the modern Italians express themselves in such a florid form of words and such tedious circumlocutions as are used by none but pedants in our own country; and at the same time fill their writings with such poor imaginations and conceits as our youths are ashamed of before they have been two years at the university. Some may be apt to think that it is the difference of genius which produces this difference in the works of the two nations: but to show there is nothing in this, if we look into the writings of the old Italians, such as Cicero and Virgil, we shall find that the English writers, in their way of thinking and expressing themselves, resemble those authors much more than the modern Italians pretend to do. And as for the poet himself, from whom the dreams of this opera are taken, I must entirely agree with Monsieur Boileau, that one verse of Virgil is worth all the *clinquant*, or tinsel, of Tasso."

Sheer ignorance dictated the above sneer against Handel, whose character, as a musician, Addison was wholly unable to appreciate. His remarks on the Italian writers betray an ignorance which is rather more surprising. The Italian prose, especially of the older writers, is more verbose and figurative than ours; and such passages as that ridiculed by Addison are to be found in their best authors. Though now considerably changed, it was then the national manner, and no more to be ridiculed, in any particular writer, than the peculiar genius and idiom of the language. It is a mere sophism to bring Cicero and Virgil into the argument in the character of *old* Italians, there being little or nothing in common between the ancient Romans and the modern Italians, besides the circumstance of the one occupying the same portion of the globe which the other occupied two thousand years before. When Addison talked of the writings of the Italians being filled with poor imaginations and conceits, he must have shut his eyes to the thousand forms of sublimity, beauty, grace, and elegance, presented by the host of Italian poets whose writings *ought*, at least, to have been well known to him. But what can we think of his character as a critic in Italian literature, when we find him taking his opinion of Tasso from the flippant antithesis of Boileau?

In a subsequent paper* Addison professes "to

* Spectator, No. 18.

deliver down to posterity a faithful account of the Italian opera, and of the gradual progress which it has made upon the English stage; "for there is no question (he says) but our great-grandchildren will be very curious to know the reason why their forefathers used to sit together like an audience of foreigners in their own country, and to hear whole plays acted before them in a tongue which they did not understand." He proceeds thus to account for this singular phenomenon:

"*Arsinoe* was the first opera that gave us a taste of Italian music. The great success this opera met with produced some attempts of forming pieces upon Italian plans, which should give a more natural and reasonable entertainment than what can be met with in the elaborate trifles of that nation. This alarmed the poetasters and fiddlers of the town, who were used to deal in a more ordinary kind of ware; and therefore laid down an established rule, which is received as such to this day, *That nothing is capable of being well set to music, that is not nonsense.*

"This maxim was no sooner received but we immediately fell to translating the Italian operas; and as there was no great danger of hurting the sense of those extraordinary pieces, our authors would often make words of their own which were entirely foreign to the meaning of the passages they pretended to translate; their chief care being to make the numbers of the English verse answer to

those of the Italian, that both of them might go to the same tune. Thus the famous song in *Camilla*,

"*Barbara, si, t'intendo, &c.*"

"Barbarous woman, yes, I know your meaning," which expresses the resentments of an angry lover, was translated into that English lamentation,

Frail are a lover's hopes, &c.

And it was pleasant enough to see the most refined persons of the British nation dying away and languishing to notes that were filled with a spirit of rage and indignation. It happened also very frequently, where the sense was rightly translated, the necessary transposition of words, which were drawn out of the phrase of one tongue into that of another, made the music appear very absurd in one tongue that was very natural in the other. I remember an Italian verse that ran thus, word for word,

"And turn'd my rage into pity,"

which the English for rhyme's sake translated,

"And into pity turn'd my rage."

By this means the soft notes that were adapted to *pity* in the Italian, fell upon the word *rage* in the English; and the angry sounds that were turned to *rage* in the original were made to express *pity* in the translation. It oftentimes happened, like-

wise, that the finest notes in the air fell upon the most insignificant words in the sentence. I have known the word *And* pursued through the whole gamut, have been entertained with many a melodious *The*, and have heard the most beautiful graces, quavers, and divisions bestowed upon *Then*, *For*, and *From;* to the eternal honour of our English particles.

"The next step to our refinement was the introduction of Italian actors into our opera; who sung their parts in their own language, at the same time that our countrymen performed theirs in our native tongue. The king or hero of the play generally spoke in Italian, and his slaves answered him in English; the lover frequently made his court, and gained the heart of his princess, in a language which she did not understand. One would have thought it very difficult to have carried on dialogues after this manner without an interpreter between the persons that conversed together; but this was the state of the English stage for about three years.

"At length the audience got tired of understanding half the opera; and, therefore, to ease themselves entirely of the fatigue of thinking, have so ordered it at present, that the whole opera is performed in an unknown tongue. We no longer understand the language of our own stage; insomuch that I have often been afraid, when I have seen our Italian performers chattering in the vehe-

mence of action, that they have been calling us names and abusing us among themselves: but I hope, since we do put such entire confidence in them, they will not talk against us before our faces, though they may do it with the same safety as if it were behind our backs. In the meantime I cannot forbear thinking how naturally an historian who writes two or three hundred years hence, and does not know the taste of his wise forefathers, will make the following reflection. *In the beginning of the eighteenth century the Italian tongue was so well understood in England, that operas were acted on the public stage in that language.*

"One scarce knows how to be serious in the confutation of an absurdity that shows itself at the first sight. It does not want any great measure of sense to see the ridicule of this monstrous practice; but what makes it the more astonishing, it is not the taste of the rabble, but of persons of the greatest politeness, which has established it.

"If the Italians have a genius for music above the English, the English have a genius for other performances of much higher nature, and capable of giving the mind a much nobler entertainment. Would one think it was possible (at a time when an author lived that was able to write the *Phedra and Hippolitus*) for a people to be so stupidly fond of the Italian opera as scarce to give a third day's hearing to that admirable tragedy? Music is certainly a very agreeable entertainment: but if it

would take entire possession of our ears, if it would make us incapable of hearing sense, if it would exclude arts that have a much greater tendency to the refinement of human nature, I must confess I would allow it no better quarter than Plato has done, who banishes it out of his commonwealth.

"At present our notions of music are so very uncertain, that we do not know what it is we like; only, in general, we are transported with anything that is not English: so it be of foreign growth, let it be Italian, French, or High Dutch, it is the same thing. In short, our English music is quite rooted out, and nothing yet planted in its stead."

There is good sense and just criticism in all this, though certainly mingled with error. Much allowance must be made for the state of things when Addison wrote. It was perfectly true that, at that time, "our English music was quite rooted out," and this truth could not be palatable to an Englishman. It was natural to feel some dislike for the music which had usurped the place of that of our own country. Purcell, though not twenty years dead, was as clean forgotten as if he had never been; and the bright dawn of a national opera, by his untimely death, had fallen back to dark midnight. No English composer of the smallest genius had appeared; and the growing love for the sweet strains of the south prevented the want of native talent from being felt. At that time Addison entertained the patriotic wish of creating an English

opera; and he rightly judged that this object was to be accomplished by producing English pieces upon the model of the Italian stage. He accordingly wrote his *Rosamond*. Had Purcell yet lived, the fame of the fellow-labourer of Dryden would at once have pointed him out to Addison as his partner in the work; and Addison, in all probability, would have stood in our musical annals as the founder of the regular English opera. Addison, however, marred his own design by his choice of Clayton; an error for which he has undergone the indignant censure of almost every musical writer. But, after all, he was more unfortunate than blamable. In choosing Clayton, his fault was more venial than that of Dryden in choosing Grabut; for Dryden chose a worthless Frenchman in preference to his gifted countryman; while Addison chose the only Englishman who appears at that time to have had any pretensions to musical reputation. It is true that Clayton was a mere pretender, but he was a specious and plausible one, and his pretensions had passed current with the public. He had produced an opera which had been most favourably received; and it was not wonderful that Addison (who, like many other lyric poets, laid no claim to musical connoisseurship) should have fallen into the general error in estimating his character. It is hardly fair, therefore, to visit Addison with any severe blame for the failure of his praiseworthy, and

(with this single exception,) judicious and able endeavour to give a local habitation and a name to the English musical drama.

It is to be observed, too, that although, in our day, we look with complacency on the Italian opera as a delightful entertainment, yet we do so because we have it in addition to our own English opera, and not in place of it. If, as in the days of Addison, "our English music were quite rooted out, and nothing planted in its stead;" if the Italian opera were the only musical drama existing in England; we should look upon this exotic entertainment much in the same light in which it was viewed by Addison. We should ask, why has not England her own musical drama, as well as Italy, or Germany, or France? Why should we depend entirely upon foreigners for an entertainment which we have the capacity, both musical and dramatic, to provide for ourselves? From the whole import of Addison's observations it may be gathered that he was not insensible to the beauties of the Italian opera, but that his spleen was moved by the monopoly which it had acquired of the stage, to the exclusion not only of the English opera, but even of the regular drama; for he complains that the people were so stupidly fond of it, as scarce to give a third day's hearing to an admirable tragedy.

Many of Addison's censures, moreover, were perfectly just, and his sarcasms well founded. It has

been shown in a previous chapter that the Italian stage was in a low state at the beginning of the eighteenth century: and the dramas which we then imported from Italy were, of course, in the prevailing fashion; made up of frivolous incidents, feeble poetry, and showy, but ridiculous scenic exhibitions. The reign of taste and reason, under Apostolo Zeno and Metastasio, had not yet begun.

But, on the other hand, his attacks were too sweeping and indiscriminate. He goes too far when he maintains that an opera in a language different from that of the country in which it is represented, is an absurdity. The best proof of the contrary is the unvarying delight which the Italian opera has given to the inhabitants of every country into which it has been introduced. An absurdity in manners, dress, or amusement, may be in vogue for a time, and may acquire a currency through the influence of fashion; but whatever preserves its ascendency from age to age, is sure to be founded on some permanent principle of taste or reason. The opera is of a twofold nature: it is a dramatic representation and a musical entertainment. The music is not merely the language in which the personages of the drama express their sentiments and feelings, but is calculated to produce a separate and very intense pleasure, that which is derived from "the concord of sweet sounds." A song may charm the ear, and even affect the heart, though we

do not understand its words or know its subject. Music, in itself, is "most eloquent;" it speaks more powerfully than words. The delicious tones of Grisi might "lap us in Elysium;" her soft complaining accents might dissolve us in tenderness; we might be roused and excited by the spirit-stirring energy of Pasta, were we ignorant of the very names of the characters represented by these accomplished performers. But, among the thousands who listen to them, is there a single individual who is so ignorant? Surely not. Does any one who witnesses Pasta's beautiful and terrible representation of Medea not know enough of the history of the enchantress—her base desertion and terrible revenge—to enter deeply into the spirit of the scene? When, with desperate fondness, she is hanging over her little children, exclaiming, in tones of the bitterest anguish,

"Miseri pargoletti,
Ah, che innocenti siete!"

does any of the audience, however ignorant of the language, feel at a loss, from not understanding the words, to know what is passing before them?

In listening to an air, very little attention is paid to the words. Indeed, unless they are already known, they can rarely be followed, even when in the vernacular tongue. The protracted tones, the embellishments, the repetitions, make it very frequently impossible for the most skilful singer to

make them intelligible. It is only in the case of ballads, or narrative songs of many stanzas, that we ever think of making an effort to follow the words. But such songs do not occur in the Italian opera. The words of an air are of small importance to the comprehension of the business of the piece. They merely express a sentiment, a reflection, a feeling: it is quite enough if their general import is known; and this may most frequently be gathered from the situation, aided by the character and expression of the music. "The German composers," says Madame de Staël, "follow too closely the sense of the words. This, it is true, is a great merit in the opinion of those who love the words better than the music; and, indeed, it cannot be denied, that a disagreement between the sense of the one and the expression of the other would be offensive: but the Italians, who are truly the musicians of nature, make the air and the words conform to each other only in a general way. As in popular ballads there is not much music, the little that there is may be subjected to the words; but in the great effects of melody we should endeavour to reach the soul by an immediate sensation." Such a *contresens* as that mentioned by Addison, where, in consequence of an inversion of the words in the translation of an Italian verse, "the soft notes that were adapted to *pity* in the Italian, fell upon the word *rage* in the English, and the angry sounds that

were turned to *rage* in the original, were made to express *pity* in the translation," has often happened in the verbal method of musical composition ascribed by Madame de Staël to the Germans, but it could not arise in the music of a composer who, attending only to the general spirit of the words, would never dream of putting soft notes into one part of his air and angry sounds into another, because he found the word *pity* in the beginning of a sentence, and *rage* in the end of it.

It is not merely because the words of an Italian opera are foreign, but because they are *sung*, that we are obliged (at least till we become acquainted with the piece) to follow them by the help of a *libretto*. The Italians themselves use the *libretto* as well as we do. The author of *La Vie de Rossini* cautions his readers against destroying their pleasure at the representation of an opera, by poring over the *libretto*. Speaking of the performance of *L'Italiana in Algieri* at Vicenza, he says, "I saw that the first night the spectators had recourse to the *libretto* to obtain an idea of the action of the piece; and that, at every *morceau*, they read a line or two, to catch the passion or sentiment which the music was to express. But, during the forty representations which followed, nobody ever dreamed of opening the little gilded book they held in their hands." He goes on to mention a lady at Venice who felt the effect of the *libretto* to be so disagree-

able, that she would not allow it to be brought into her box, even on a first night's performance. "She had a summary of the plot drawn up in forty or fifty lines; and the subject of every air, duet, or concerted piece, put down in four or five words; as for example, 'Taddeo's jealousy,'—'Lindor's passionate love,'—'Isabella's flirtation with the Bey,' &c.; and this little *argument* was followed by the first line of the air or duet." "I saw," adds M. Stendhal, "that everybody found this a most convenient plan: and this is the way, I think, in which *libretti* ought to be printed for amateurs—such amateurs, at least, as love music as it is loved at Venice." It is not unworthy of remark, that this is very like the mode of printing the *libretti* of the Italian operas performed here in the time of Addison. The original and translation (as at present) were printed on opposite pages; but the dialogue in recitative only was translated; the subject of the airs being indicated by a single phrase, exactly in the manner suggested by M. Stendhal. For example, in Handel's *Amadigi*, a scene between Amadis and the enchanter Melissa, in which he disdains her passion and defies her power, concludes thus—

"*Amadigi.* [Recitativo.] L'arti tue non faranno
Che accrescere al mio petto, e forza, e ardire.

[Aria.] Non sa temere
Questo mio petto;
S'ardir l'accende,

L'accende amor :
Saprà vedere
Odio e dispetto ;
Strane vicende
Non teme il cor.

Thus rendered in the libretto ;

"*Amadis.* All your dire arts this sole effect will have,
To add new strength and courage to my soul.

[*He says that his heart, inflamed with love and courage, fears nothing.*"

In the same opera, Oriana, in a tender scene with her lover, says to him :

"Vado, ma tosto riedi,
Che lontana di te duro è il soggiorno.
O caro mio tesor,
Deh, presto torna a me,
E vieni a consolar
Quest' alma amante ;
Che non può questo cor
Esser lontan da te,
Che bramo ogn'or mirar
Il tuo sembiante."

Thus rendered ;

"I go, but pray let your return be soon,
For in your absence no abode can please."

[*She entreats him to return with speed to comfort her loving soul, because her heart cannot be long from him for whose sight she is always longing.*"

If, in short, there is anything in the objection that the audience cannot follow the words of an opera, it is not confined to the Italian opera. Wherever words are sung, they must also be read, in the first instance at least ; and this we every day find to be

the case on the English as well as the Italian stage. To enjoy a really good opera, it must be heard over and over again; and those who do so soon understand its plot, incidents, situations, sentiments, and passions, whether it be English or Italian. Those who form the habitual audience of the opera-house are as well acquainted with the favourite Italian pieces as the frequenters of Drury-lane and Covent-garden with the popular productions of our own stage.

Addison's complaint of the preference of foreign music, and the neglect of native talent, has continued to be made down to the present day, and repeated till it has become a sort of cant. It was greatly exaggerated by Addison; and where it existed, there was considerable reason for it. We encouraged foreign composers, because we had none of our own worthy of the name. The English composer, patronised by Addison, and on whose behalf he made this complaint, met with a reception infinitely beyond his deserts. We preferred the Italian singers, because we could not be deaf to their superiority; and yet (as has been seen in the preceding pages,) our native singers of that day, when they deserved applause and encouragement, received it abundantly. Of the grounds of the complaint in later times we shall hereafter have occasion to speak.

Having traced the progress of the Italian opera, not only in its native country, but in France, Ger-

many, and England, down to the era of the appearance of Metastasio, we shall take a review of the life and writings of that great poet, and then follow the further progress of the musical drama in Italy. No account of the Italian opera in other countries, at any period, can be made intelligible, unless its situation at its source is understood.

CHAPTER XIII.

Life of Metastasio.

Metastasio was born at Rome, on the 6th of January, 1698. His real name was Pietro Trapasso. His father, Felice Trapasso, was of a respectable, decayed family of Assisi. Such was the poverty of its representative, that he was compelled, in his youth, to enlist as a soldier, and was in that situation when he married and became the father of so illustrious a son. Having served the usual time, and by great economy saved a little money, he entered into business at Rome, as a dealer in oil, flour, pastry, and other culinary articles, the profits of which enabled him to place his son at a grammar school.

The young Pietro discovered his passion for poetry at a very early age, and exhibited a power of *improvising* on any given subject, before he was ten years old. He was in the custom of exercising this faculty, after school hours, in his father's shop; and crowds of persons used to assemble round the door to hear him sing his extempore

verses. On one of these occasions, the celebrated civilian Gravina chanced to pass by. Struck with the sweetness of the boy's voice, he stopped to listen, and soon discovered that the verses he was singing were his own. Surprised and delighted with the precocity of the little poet's genius, the lawyer entered into conversation with him, and was equally charmed with his modesty and intelligence. Gravina became warmly interested in his behalf; and immediately conceived the idea of adopting him as his son, in order that such talents might receive due cultivation. He made his proposal to the boy's parents; and so advantageous an offer was joyfully and thankfully accepted. Next morning Pietro was taken by his father and mother to Gravina's house, and received into his family.

Gravina was not only a profound and eminent lawyer, but a man of letters, and an enthusiastic votary of poetry and the arts. Being a great lover of Grecian literature, he took the somewhat affected step of translating the name of his *protégé* from Italian to Greek; calling him *Metastasio* instead of *Trapasso*. His object was to turn the young man's natural eloquence to the best account, by making him an orator instead of a poet; and, for this purpose, he determined that he should embrace the honourable and lucrative profession of the law. The young poet applied himself to the studies pointed out to him by his adopted father; but his

ruling passion could not be restrained: and Gravina wisely resolved to allow him to read the best and most classical poetical authors. Into these congenial studies Metastasio entered with ardour; and, their first-fruits was a tragedy *(Giustino)* written at the age of fourteen. With his production, his maturer judgment, as might be expected, was far from being satisfied. In a letter to the Italian poet Calsabigi, he thus speaks of it: "I should have wished that none of my early productions, which savour so much of adolescence, had appeared in the Paris edition, particularly the tragedy of *Giustino*, written at fourteen years of age; when the authority of my illustrious master did not suffer me to move a step from the most devout imitation of the Greeks; and when my inexperience and want of discernment were unable to distinguish gold from lead, even in those mines themselves of which he then began to show me the treasures." There are many beauties, however, in this tragedy; and its story is affecting. Though Metastasio cannot be supposed to have read Shakspeare, there is a singular coincidence between one of the incidents and that in *Romeo and Juliet*, where Juliet revives after Romeo, supposing her dead, has swallowed poison. In this play, Sophia, supposing Giustino to have perished, poisons herself, and is then informed that he still lives. There are some pieces of lyric poetry at the end of each act. It does not appear whether it was ever

performed. It is quite different from the opera of the same name performed in England, with Handel's music, in 1737.

From this time Gravina appears to have not only permitted, but encouraged,his pupil's poetical pursuits. When he was eighteen, Gravina took him to Naples, for the purpose of affording him an opportunity of exercising his talent for improvisation, along with some of the greatest masters of that truly Italian art. In one of his letters, speaking modestly of his youthful talent as an *improvisatore*, Metastasio says: "This phenomenon so dazzled my great master Gravina, that he was partial to it, and cherished me as a soil worthy of his cultivation. So late as the year 1716, he exhibited me to speak verses, God knows how, upon all kinds of subjects; at which time I had for competitors the illustrious Rolli, Vagnini, and the Cavaliere Perfetti; men who were then arrived at full maturity, and veterans in Pindaric battles." He excited universal admiration among the susceptible and enthusiastic Neapolitans. The method, clearness, and richness of classical allusion, with which he treated his subject, the beauty of his verses, the sweetness of his voice, and his graceful manner in reciting them, his handsome and expressive features, and the mingled dignity and modesty of his deportment, made him the idol of every one who heard and saw him.

He still continued to pursue the study of the

law, and also entered into the church, and took the minor orders of priesthood. Hence he always received the title of the Abate Metastasio. This step he took in compliance with the advice of Gravina, the law and the church being the most promising roads to preferment at Rome.

In 1718, Metastasio lost his kind friend and patron, who died at the age of fifty-four; Metastasio being then twenty. By a will made the previous year, Gravina, who was unmarried and childless, made his adopted son heir to his property, amounting to fifteen thousand crowns, or between 3000*l.* and 4000*l.* sterling. Metastasio deeply mourned the death of his benefactor, and paid a beautiful tribute to his memory in the elegy entitled *La Strada della Gloria*, read by him at an assembly of the members of the Arcadian Academy, a literary institution of which Gravina was the founder.

Metastasio thus became his own master, and the possessor of a considerable fortune, at too early an age to make a prudent use of his independence. His poetry found plenty of admirers, and his table was in no want of guests He abandoned the dry study of the law, and, intoxicated by perpetual applause, thought of nothing but furnishing matter for it. Surrounded by flatterers and parasites, whom, in his youthful inexperience, he imagined to be his friends, he thought not of the morrow, till he was rudely awakened from his dream of enjoyment by the discovery that Gravina's legacy was dis-

sipated, and that his dear friends were falling from him.

Finding himself, in the space of two years, thus reduced to the verge of poverty, and having his eyes opened to the folly of the life he had been leading, Metastasio removed to Naples, with the view of resuming the study of the law. He placed himself under the guidance of an advocate named Pagliotti, one of the most eminent lawyers in Naples, and so rigidly devoted to his profession, that he disliked and despised every kind of ornamental literature. Poetry he held in especial abhorrence, as the most deadly sin of which a lawyer could be guilty. It required no small exertion of fortitude on the part of the youthful poet to place himself under the control of such a man, aware, as he was, of his rigid notions and austere disposition. Metastasio's poetical fame was very far from increasing the complacency or indulgence of the stern lawyer. But Metastasio submitted patiently to the severity of his discipline, and for some time applied himself so steadily to his tasks, that Pagliotti began to have hopes of making him a good lawyer, and treated him as kindly as the bitterness of his temper would allow.

But this did not last. Metastasio was a general favourite at Naples, and his society was sought by persons of eminence and distinction. In 1721, he was tempted to deviate from the strict line of duty he had laid down for himself, by the solicitations

ofthe Countess Althan, who prevailed on him to write an epithalamium for the nuptials of a member of her family. This gave rise to *Endymion*, the first of his operas, which was afterwards published, with a dedication to this lady, dated 30th May.

The ice was now broken, and Metastasio was a poet for life. His backsliding, however, was for some time concealed from his legal mentor. Having been requested, by no less a personage than the Viceroy of Naples, to write a musical drama, to be performed on the birthday of the Empress Elizabeth, the consort of the Emperor Charles VI., Metastasio complied with much hesitation, and on condition that his delinquency should be kept a profound secret. In perpetual fear of the vigilant lawyer, he sacrificed his hours of sleep to what was to him a labour of love; and speedily produced *Gli Orti Esperidi*, one of the most beautiful of his early works. The viceroy, on receiving the manuscript, presented the poet with two hundred ducats. The music was composed by the celebrated Porpora; and so well was the secret kept, that the piece was performed without even the composer or the singers knowing who was the author. Its success, however, seems to have determined Metastasio to put an end to all further concealment of his poetical pursuits: for it was immediately published at Naples, and with a dedication to the Vice-Queen, dated 28th August, 1724, and subscribed with his name. In the following year he produced

his *Angelica*, which was also set by Porpora, and first performed on the birth day of the Empress.

These dramas were received at Naples with unbounded delight and applause. The principal character in *Gli Orti Esperidi* was performed by Marianna Bulgarini, (called La Romanina from her birthplace,) the greatest singer and actress of her time. Inspired with admiration of the beauty of the piece, and gratitude for the distinguished reception it had procured for herself, she ardently desired to be acquainted with the author, and having found that one of her intimate friends knew him, she prevailed on him to try and bring the poet to her house. Metastasio resisted a temptation which, he felt, would draw him farther than ever from the study of the law; but he was at last persuaded by the importunities of his friend to pay her a visit. La Bulgarini was one of the most beautiful and highly gifted women of her time, possessing a strong and cultivated mind along with all the charms and accomplishments of her sex. A warm and intimate friendship sprang up between them, which endured for a long course of years, and was not broken but by the hand of death.

All these doings were anything but pleasing to the old advocate. The young poet and he became every day more disagreeable to each other; and at last Metastasio determined to leave him, and abandon the study of a profession for which nature never intended him. He was stimulated to devote

himself to poetry, by the encouragement and counsels of his female friend, by whom and her husband he was pressingly invited to live with them, an invitation which, after much hesitation, he accepted.

His biographer, Saverio Mattei, relates an anecdote of his life at this period, which, while it shows the power of his extemporaneous poetry, gives a strange view of the state of jurisprudence in the kingdom of Naples. During his residence at Naples, after the death of Gravina, Metastasio was involved in a lawsuit for part of the possessions in that kingdom bequeathed him by the civilian. Having applied to the Princess Belmonte (who herself told the story to his biographer) for her interest with the judges, she told him, that if he would first make her acquainted with the merits of the case, and convince her that justice was on his side, by pleading his cause in verse *all' improvista*, she would use her influence in his behalf. Accordingly he pleaded his cause in a song, in so pathetic a manner, that he drew tears from the princess. Next day she applied to the judges, to whom she stated the merits of the cause, expatiating at the same time on the wonderful talents of her client, and entreating them to listen to a pleading such as he had made to her. The judges accordingly assembled in the princess's palace, and Metastasio, without repeating a word of what he had sung before, defended his cause with such fire, elegance, and

enthusiasm, that there was not a dry eye in the room. Soon afterwards the question was regularly decided in his favour; and his adversary lost his cause, not because he was in the wrong, but because he was not a poet and a musician, an eloquent declaimer, and a beautiful singer. All this is supremely ridiculous, and indeed much worse; but there seems to be no doubt of the truth of the story.

Metastasio's next opera, *La Didone Abbandonata*, was produced at Naples during the carnival of 1724. The part of Eneas was performed by the celebrated Nicolini, and Dido by Bulgarini; this subject having been chosen by the poet in order to afford her an opportunity of displaying all her powers. Mattei says, that Bulgarini was a great actress, and that Metastasio himself was obliged to her for suggesting to him the finest situations in this opera; such as the fourteenth and fifteenth scenes of the second act, which were entirely of her invention. *Didone* was received with acclamations by the Neapolitans. Many editions of it were published, and it was soon performed in the other principal theatres of Italy. The original music was composed by Sarro; but it employed the talents of many of the greatest dramatic composers, almost down to the end of the last century.

Few particulars are preserved of the life of Signora Bulgarini. In 1709 she was at Venice, standing in the highest rank of her profession; and it does not appear that she ever sang on the stage

after she quitted Venice in 1726. She could not, therefore, have been very young in 1722, when her intimacy with Metastasio began.

During the carnival of 1726, *Didone* was performed at Rome, with music by Leonardo Vinci. The impression it produced is thus described by the celebrated ex-jesuit Cordara, in his *éloge* on Metastasio. "Every scene produced incessant applause. But who can describe the rapture of the audience, when the Queen of Carthage, rising disdainfully from her throne, represses the insolent pretensions of the King of Mauritania, with the dignity of an independent princess, by the spirited air, 'Son Regina?' The acclamations seemed to shake the theatre to its foundation. I was not there myself, as my habit did not allow me to be present at such spectacles; but I almost heard the sounds in my cell, so filled was all Rome with the fame of this production."

In 1727, Metastasio, with Signora Bulgarini and her husband, removed to Rome; he having stipulated that, in return for the hospitality he had received under her roof at Naples, she and her family should become his guests at Rome. A house was provided sufficient for the accommodation of the two families, and they continued to dwell under one roof till the poet's departure for Germany.

The first drama produced by Metastasio for the Roman theatre was *Catone in Utica*, which was performed in 1728 with the music of Vinci, and, in

the following year, at Venice, with the music of Leonardo Leo. His next operas were *Ezio* and *Semiramide Riconosciuta*, both composed by Porpora. Both these operas were most favourably received; but hitherto his productions seem to have gained him more applause than profit. His necessities still compelled him to accept pecuniary assistance from Signora Bulgarini. He was humbled and mortified; and his circumstances so preyed on his mind, that he fell into a state of deep despondency.

While in this situation, he unexpectedly received a letter from Prince Pio of Savoy, written from Vienna, and containing, in consequence of the fame he had acquired as a dramatic poet, a proposal that he should enterin to the service of the emperor as colleague of Apostolo Zeno, who, having arrived at the age of sixty, desired assistance in the performance of his duties, and had recommended Metastasio as being pre-eminently qualified for the situation. It cost him a painful effort to make up his mind to leave his country, family, and friends; but, moved by the generous and disinterested counsels of Signora Bulgarini, and aware of the hazard of losing the tide,

> "Which, taken at the full, leads on to fortune,"

he resolved to accept the offer.

A bitter feeling of disappointment, too, seems to have contributed to this act of voluntary expatriation. He had received plenty of vain and empty applause,

and had enjoyed the smiles and favour of the great; but all his hopes of advancement, founded on their friendship and promises, had proved utterly delusive. After some correspondence, therefore, with the prince of Savoy, an engagement was concluded, at a salary of three thousand florins (about £300 sterling) per annum; and Metastasio quitted his native country for ever.

On leaving Rome, Metastasio left the management of all his affairs to the care of his zealous friend, Signora Bulgarini; and an uninterrupted and affectionate correspondence was kept up between them as long as she lived. In the ample collection of his letters, those addressed to *La Romanina* are among the most pleasing and interesting.

He arrived at Vienna in July 1730, and was received by the emperor and the court with the utmost distinction. He appears at first to have produced some little *pièces de circonstance;* but his first regular opera for the imperial theatre was *Adriano in Siria*, which was performed, for the first time, on the 4th of November 1731, with the music of Caldara. His next opera, *Demetrio*, was performed a few days afterwards. In a letter to La Romanina, dated November 10, 1731, he gives her the following account of its reception:—"I did not think I should have such good tidings to send you to-day; indeed I was quite prepared for the contrary. Last Sunday my opera of *Demetrio* was performed for the first time, with such applause that the oldest people in

the country assure me they do not remember approbation so universal. The audience wept at the parting scene ; and my most august patron was not insensible to it. Notwithstanding the great respect for the sovereign, his presence did not restrain the applause during many of the recitatives. Those who previously were my enemies are now become my advocates. I am unable to express to you my surprise at this success, as the opera is a gentle and delicate piece, without any of those bold strokes which produce great effects; nor did I believe it adapted to the national taste. But I was mistaken. Everything showed that it was well understood by the audience, and they repeat parts of it in conversation, as if it were written in German. My master began to show his satisfaction from the end of the first act, and afterwards expressed it openly to all around him. The music is of the most modern kind that Caldara has composed; but all the discontented world is not to be satisfied." After speaking of the scenery and the performers, he concludes: " And here is my whole history, which I would not have written to any one but you, as others would pronounce me to be a vain coxcomb." In the beginning of the following year this opera was brought out at Rome under the direction of Signora Bulgarini, who acted as the poet's representative during the rehearsals. In one of his letters to her, he gives her some directions as to the representation, and adds: " These were the arrange-

ments here, and I have seen the inhabitants of these northern regions weep. Do you produce the same effects."

From the following passage in a letter to La Romanina, dated 23rd February 1732, it would seem that he had not entirely lost sight of his ecclesiastical views. "There is an abbey vacant in Sicily, called *Santa Lucia*, by the death of a certain Abate Barbara; but my misfortune is, that I do not know in what diocese it is situated, or whether it is requisite that the incumbent should be a regular ecclesiastic." The matter, however, is not further alluded to in his correspondence.

On the 28th of July, 1733, he writes to La Romanina, telling her that he had received from the emperor the office of treasurer to the province of Cosenza in the kingdom of Naples; "a post for life," he says, "of honour and authority; and if I were to perform the duties of it in person, of considerable profit; but even after paying a deputy, the clear salary will amount to 1500 florins (about £150 sterling) a year." "You see," he adds, "that the appointment is not inconsiderable in point of pecuniary advantage; but be assured that the honour done me by the solicitude, affection, and condescension with which the emperor has deigned to confer this benefit upon me, infinitely surpasses all considerations of lucre. It was publicly announced, at the emperor's table, to one of the members of the council, as a reward for my past and present

labours; and his majesty was pleased to add that he had, unsolicited, mentioned this appointment as my just due. This public declaration of his majesty in my favour made such an impression, that yesterday, when the decree was mentioned, contrary to custom, there was not one of the counsellors who ventured to utter a syllable against it; but some of them said coldly that the order should be executed, while the rest applauded the justice and propriety of the appointment. I shall probably be put to some difficulty in paying the fees of office, which, I believe, will be considerable; but I shall soon be reimbursed."

In February, 1734, Metastasio lost his friend Signora Bulgarini, who manifested the sincerity of her affection for him, by bequeathing to him, after the decease of her husband, all her property, to the amount of twenty-five thousand crowns. But Metastasio instantly declined to accept this intended kindness, and made over to her husband his whole interest in the bequest. There can be no doubt that Signora Bulgarini possessed this property independently of her husband, and that her bequest to Metastasio was perfectly legal; as all his biographers concur in speaking of his renunciation of it in terms of the highest eulogy.

What was the nature of Metastasio's connexion with this lady can only be subject of conjecture. There is certainly room for suspicion, in so close an intimacy of the young poet and a beautiful and

highly accomplished woman, who, moreover, was much attached to him. But yet there are circumstances not easily reconcilable to the supposition of anything criminal in their intercourse. While they lived together, both at Naples and Rome, the husband, as well as the wife, was a member of the united family. Metastasio was on the most friendly footing with him, and, in his letters, speaks of him with respect as well as affection. For example, in a letter to Signora Bulgarini, written from Vienna in 1731, Metastasio says, "I now discover the worth of my dear Marianna, who, in her letters and her prudent conduct, not only pleases me at present, but gives a different face to past times. You have surpassed all my expectations. It is the fear of trebling the expense of postage that prevents my writing to Leopold [his brother] and my dear Bulgarini. Thank the latter heartily in my name, and take that care of him which he merits. Tell Leopold that I shall always love him, if he acts in such a manner as to deserve your esteem." Immediately on hearing of Signora Bulgarini's death, Metastasio wrote the following letter to her husband.

"TO SIGNOR DOMENICO BULGARINI.

"Oppressed by the afflicting news of the death of our poor Marianna, I know not how to begin this letter. The tidings are intolerable to me on so many accounts, that I can devise no means to dimi-

nish the acuteness of my sufferings ; and therefore I trust you will not accuse me of want of feeling, if I am unable to suggest to you any consolation for your loss, as I have hitherto been utterly unable to find any for myself.

" The last disposition of the poor deceased in my favour augments the cause of my sorrow, and obliges me to give a public and incontestable proof of the disinterestedness of that friendship which I professed to her while living, and which I shall preserve for her honoured memory to the last moment of my life. Knowing, therefore, how much affection, kindness, and zeal for the welfare of the poor Marianna you have always manifested, I shall best show my gratitude to her by entirely renouncing in your favour all claim to her property ; not through pride—God preserve me from such ingratitude!—but because it appears to be my duty as an honest man and a Christian. The advantage which I shall still derive from this inheritance, even after renouncing it, will not be inconsiderable ; as the knowing what was intended for me by the generous testatrix will be a lasting proof of her friendship ; and the relinquishing it in your favour will be a proof of my disinterestedness in respect to her, and of my justice towards you. I am at present, thank God, in no need of such assistance, as I am recompensed beyond my merit ; so that I shall not suffer by the sacrifice I make to you. Though I entangle you with no

conditions in the renunciation which I enclose, yet I have some requests to make, and counsels to suggest to you.

" My first request is, that the relinquishment of this claim may in nowise dissolve our friendship; but that, according to the wish of the poor Marianna, our correspondence may continue as entire as if she were still living; substituting you at all times and in all places as her representative.

" My second request is, that you will undertake the trouble of receiving the salaries of my three offices at Rome, and the transacting of my Neapolitan concerns, in the same manner as was done by our incomparable Marianna; for which purpose I send you proper powers. I write likewise to Signor Tenerelli at Naples, who will communicate with you in the same manner as he did with Signora Marianna herself; remitting to you, from time to time, whatever sums may be due to me from that quarter, continuing to my poor family the usual assignments and provision, if you shall choose it, jointly with my brother.

" The advice which I would wish to give you is, that you would assist the poor family of Signor Francisco Lombardi by every means in your power, and try, by acts of charity, to do everything for them, which in a similar situation you would expect them to do to you. I have specified in my renunciation some particulars in which you should assist them; but besides my unwillingness to in-

volve you in trouble and difficulty, I am so certain of the goodness of your heart that I have left all the merit of your benevolence towards them to the liberality of your own determination.

" In all things else, you are at liberty to act as circumstances and your own prudence shall suggest.

" At present my mind is too much disturbed for me to attempt giving you a plan for the regulation of your conduct. I shall only say, that it appears to me that you should dispose of all the effects you can spare in order to raise a capital, and that you should live in a smaller house.

" I can think of no other testimony to offer you at present of my friendship and confidence. Be equally open in your correspondence with me, and consider your interests as my own, and me as your brother. I am unable now to write a longer letter; when my mind is more tranquil, I shall communicate to you such thoughts as may occur to me.

" In the mean time, love me, and endeavour to be comforted. Be assured, if it were in my power, that I would try to give you that consolation which I am unable to receive myself."

He wrote, at the same time, the following letter to his brother, the advocate, Leopold Trapassi.

" In the present agitation of my mind, in consequence of the unexpected death of the poor generous Marianna, my utmost efforts will enable me

to write but little. I can only tell you, that both my honour and conscience have obliged me to relinquish in favour of her husband Domenico that bequest which she intended for me. I owe to the world an indisputable proof that my friendship for her was not founded on avarice or self-interest. I ought not to abuse the partiality of my poor friend at the expense of her husband ; and God, I trust, will permit me, for my integrity, to prosper by some means. For myself, I am in need of no more than my present income; for my family, I have sufficient at Rome for their comfortable support. Indeed, if it shall please God to continue to me my present Neapolitan resources, I shall be able to give further proofs of my affection for my relations, and for yourself in particular. Communicate these resolutions to our father, to whom I am unable to write at present. Assure him of my fixed determination to assist him always as I have hitherto done, or rather to increase that assistance, if things are prosperous at Naples. In short, I beg you will use your utmost endeavours to make him enter into my reasons, that I may not be afflicted with his disapprobation of my honest and christian conduct.

" In the mean time, I beg you will unite interests with Signor Domenico, from whom I hope you will experience that friendship which may be expected in return for the confidence and consideration with which I have treated him. I have

transmitted to him proper powers for transacting my money concerns, so that things will go on as usual. But poor Marianna will never return! and I believe that the rest of my life will be tasteless and sorrowful. Do not condemn my resolution, I entreat you, and believe me ever yours."

We must add to these letters some passages from others, written, at the same period, to a friend in Rome.

"Was it necessary for such a calamity to happen, to procure for me the long-wished-for pleasure of hearing from you? At least, since the price has been so great, I beg it may be continued, to soften, by the renewal of our intercourse, the remembrance of my misfortune; a remembrance which seems to have placed me in the world as in a populous desert. In the midst of these imaginations, I have enough of reason left to tell me who and what I am; but that is not sufficient to free me from affliction. May God, in whose hands are all events, turn this affliction to my benefit, and teach me, by such a manifestation, what a vain hope it is to form plans of happiness without his assistance!"

He afterwards says to the same correspondent, "If I should affect the philosopher, and tell you that I was sorry to hear that my country had been so lavish of applause for the renunciation I have lately made, I should be very insincere. It pleases

me much, and will confirm my opinion of the justice of the act: indeed, I regard these praises as a striking instance of affection from so great a mother even to the meanest of her sons."

Though these letters do not absolutely prove the innocence of Metastasio's connexion with Signora Bulgarini, yet they furnish the strongest presumption of it. His tranquil and self-approving conscience, the solemn tenderness with which he speaks of the departed, the tone in which he addresses her husband, and, above all, the pious prayer, "May God, in whose hands are all events, turn this affliction to my benefit!"—are utterly inconsistent with the state of mind in which a man of ordinary moral feeling must have found himself, at the moment when an adulterous intercourse was suddenly terminated by the stroke of death.

From this time, Metastasio passed the remainder of his long and tranquil life at Vienna, in the uninterrupted enjoyment of the favour of the imperial family. After the death of the emperor Charles VI., he was treated with still greater distinction by the empress-queen, the celebrated Maria Theresa, whose conduct towards him was uniformly marked by personal respect and even affection, as well as admiration of his genius. No circumstances occurred that were sufficient to disturb the even tenor of his life, or the natural equanimity of his mind: and it appears from his correspondence that in the latter years of his life his strongest emotions were

those derived from the attachment of his august patroness. He was often strongly affected by her domestic afflictions, and by the misfortunes of her eventful life as a sovereign: and her death, which took place in November 1780, about a year and a half before his own, was a blow from which he never recovered. His time was occupied in the composition of his numerous dramatic pieces, all of which were written for and originally produced at the court theatre of Vienna; and his "hours of ease" were spent in the society of a small number of friends, several of whom were of high rank and distinction. Among them was the accomplished Countess Althan, the sister of his early patroness the Princess di Belmonte.

Dr. Burney, who visited Metastasio at Vienna in 1772, gives some interesting particulars respecting him.* He had been described as difficult of access, and averse from society: but this Dr. Burney found to be by no means the case. On being introduced to the veteran poet by Lord Stormont, the British ambassador, he was very kindly received, and visited him frequently during his stay in Vienna.

"The great poet," says Burney, "is lodged, as many other great poets have been before him, in a very exalted situation, up no less than four pair of stairs. Whether modern bards prefer the sublimity of this abode, on account of its being somewhat on

* State of Music in Germany

a level with Mount Parnassus, nearer their sire Apollo, or in the neighbourhood of gods in general, I shall not determine; but a more plain and humble reason can be assigned for Metastasio's habitation being 'twice two stories high,' if we consider the peculiar prerogative which the emperor enjoys at Vienna, of appropriating to the use of the officers of the court and the army the first floor of every house and palace in the city, six or eight privileged places only excepted. On this account, princes, ambassadors, and nobles usually inhabit the second stories; and the third, fourth, and even fifth floors, the houses being very large and high, are well fitted up for the reception of opulent and noble families; and our poet, though he occupies that part of a house which, in England, is thought fit only for domestics to sleep in, has, nevertheless, an exceeding good and elegant apartment, in which an imperial laureate may, with all due dignity, hold dalliance with the Muses. He received us with the utmost cheerfulness and good breeding; and I was no less astonished than pleased at finding him look so well. He does not seem more than fifty years of age, though he is at least seventy-two; and, for that time of life, he is the handsomest man I ever beheld. There are painted on his countenance all the genius, goodness, benevolence, propriety, and rectitude, which constantly characterise his writings. I could not keep my eyes off his face, it was so pleasing and worthy of contempla-

tion. His conversation was of a piece with his appearance—polite, easy, and lively. We prevailed on him to be much more communicative about music than we expected; for in general he avoids entering deeply into any particular subject."

Among other observations made by him in the course of conversation, "he did not think that there was now one singer left who could sustain the voice in the manner the old singers were used to do. I endeavoured to account for this, and he agreed with me that *theatrical music was become too instrumental*, and that the cantatas of the beginning of this century, which were sung with no other accompaniment than a harpsichord or violoncello, required better singing than the present songs, in which the noisy accompaniments can hide defects as well as beauties, and give relief to a singer." This is very much the way in which we contrast the music of our own time with that of "sixty years since:" will our successors, sixty years hence, draw a similar contrast between their music and that of our day?

Another of his opinions, according to Burney, was, "that the music of the last age was in general too full of fugues, of parts and contrivances, to be felt or understood, except by artists. All the different movements of the several parts, their inversions and divisions, he said, were unnatural, and, by covering and deforming the melody, only occa-

sioned confusion." If this opinion is limited to the music of the theatre, it is sound and important. If taken in the general sense in which it is expressed, and especially if it is applied to the music of the church, it is entirely erroneous, and its adoption has caused the decay of ecclesiastical music in Italy.

"Metastasio," continues Burney, "like most other persons in years, has an aversion to talking about his own age, about the infirmities of his friends, or the calamities or death even of persons that are indifferent to him. He is extremely candid in his judgment of men of genius, and even of poets with whom he has had a difference, who, indeed, are very few. For, when he has been attacked by them, it has often happened, that, after writing an epigram or couplet, to show his particular friends how he could defend himself, he has thrown it into the fire; and he has never been known either to print or publish a line, by way of retaliation, against the bitterest enemy to his person or poems. He has a natural cheerfulness and pleasantry in his manner and conversation, which give a gaiety to all around him, and is possessed of as easy an eloquence in speaking as in writing. He is, indeed, one of the few extraordinary geniuses who lose nothing by approximation or acquaintance; for it is a melancholy reflection that very few, like him, are equally entitled to the epithets *good*

and *great*." In these pleasing features there is a striking likeness between the character of Metastasio and that of our illustrious Scott : and Burney adds another point of resemblance; "Metastasio laughs at all poetic inspiration, and makes a poem as mechanically as another would make a watch, at what time he pleases, and without any other occasion than the want of it."

The whole circumstances of the life of this great poet indicate the purity of mind, piety, benevolence, and sweetness of disposition, which breathe throughout his writings.

Metastasio died on the 12th of April, 1782, at the age of eighty-four. Notwithstanding this advanced age, yet his faculties were so entire, his countenance was so florid, and figure so erect, his appearance so hale and active, and his constitutional cheerfulness so little impaired, that he seemed still to have many years of life before him. On the 1st of April he was in his usual health and spirits, and spent the evening, as usual, in the society of a few friends. On returning home he complained of a slight indisposition, and, at his usual hour, went to bed, from whence he never rose. In the morning he was seized with fever, and remained in a state of almost constant lethargy till he expired. By his will he had prohibited all pomp and ostentation at his funeral ; but his heir obeyed his own feelings of respect and gratitude in preference to

this injunction; and the poet was interred, with great magnificence, in the church of St. Michael. Metastasio's property, at his death, consisted of 130,000 florins, (above 12,000*l.* sterling,) with a well furnished house and a valuable library. He bequeathed it (having survived his own relatives) to M. Joseph Martinetz, and Mlle. Marianna Martinetz, the son and daughter of M. Nicolo Martinetz, a gentleman of Vienna, in whose house he had taken up his abode on his first arrival in Vienna, half a century before, and with whose family he continued, ever after, on a footing of the most intimate friendship. Mademoiselle Martinetz had been carefully educated under his own eye, and was a lady of extraordinary talents and accomplishments, especially in music. She was not only an exquisite singer and an excellent performer on the harpsichord, but, as a composer, was worthy to be compared to the first musicians of the age. Metastasio, in his letters, spoke of her genius with admiration, and communicated her compositions to his friends. He mentions, in particular, her music to a number of the psalms of the celebrated Saverio Mattei, in a letter, accompanying a copy of it, written to that poet himself. She received the distinguished honour of being chosen a member of the Philharmonic Academy of Bologna. She had received the instructions of Haydn, who, when a young man, resided for a considerable time

under her father's roof. Dr. Burney, who met her at Metastasio's house, describes her as a young lady of a very elegant appearance, and speaks in the highest terms of her manners and conversation, as well as her attainments as a composer and a performer.

CHAPTER XIV.

Writings of Metastasio.

The operas of Metastasio hold so high a place in the classical literature, not of Italy only, but of the modern world, that they have often been considered and judged of as tragedies; a test which cannot be properly applied to them. The French critics have drawn elaborate comparisons between the manner in which the same or similar subjects have been treated by Metastasio and by Corneille or Racine, forgetting their difference between an opera and a tragedy, in their objects, in the laws which must regulate their composition, and in the manner of their performance. Metastasio's operas are tragedies; but they are lyrical tragedies. Their object is, to rouse the feelings and sympathies of the audience; to touch the soul by "tender strokes of art;" to exalt the mind by noble sentiments and pictures of heroic virtue. But, while this is done, the ear must at the same time be gratified, and the taste delighted, by the sweetness of sounds and all the charms of music. A sim-

plicity of structure, therefore, a brevity of language, and an absence of minute details, which would be bare and meagre in a drama merely spoken, are absolutely necessary to prevent confusion and tediousness in musical recitation and song. In Voltaire's tragedy of *Merope*, the heroine delivers a long and eloquent address to the tyrant Polifontes, adjuring him to restore her son. A mother introduced in similar circumstances by Metastasio, expresses the same feelings in these few words :—

> " Rendimi il figlio mio ;
> Ahi ! mi si sprezza il cor :
> Non son più madre, O Dio !
> Non ho più figlio."

These short and simple exclamations are the cry of nature ; but the greatest actress could not dwell upon them long enough to produce the requisite impression. The tragic poet must give her a great deal more to say to a similar purpose. But let them be reiterated in all the varieties of tone and expression with which the genius of a Jomelli is able to clothe them, and they move the feelings of the audience more strongly than all the elaborate eloquence of Voltaire.

The lyric poet, too, labours under this further restriction, that he must construct his piece not merely with a view to its dramatic, but its musical effect. His characters must be not only kings, princesses, lovers, and villains, but they must also

be sopranos, contraltos, tenors, and basses; and the scenes must be arranged so as to produce a pleasing variety and succession of airs, duets, concerted pieces, and choruses, as well as striking situations and affecting incidents. He is generally obliged, moreover, to accommodate himself to the peculiar talents, or even defects, of the performers who may constitute the company of the theatre for which he writes. This was, in a remarkable degree, the case with Metastasio, who not only wrote almost all his pieces for the single theatre of Vienna, but found it necessary to adapt some of them to the capacities of the amateur performers of the court. His pretty opera, *Il Re Pastore*, was written to be acted by four young arch-duchesses. The emperor disliked to have his feelings *too* painfully acted upon; and Metastasio, therefore, was often obliged to sacrifice historic truth, probability, and consistency of character, for the sake of a happy termination.

Metastasio is entitled to the benefit of all these considerations, and others of a similar nature; and yet it is wonderful how little he stands in need of them. He moves in his fetters with so much grace and freedom that they rarely seem heavy, and are often altogether imperceptible. Though written expressly for the musical stage, and under all the restraints which it imposes, his operas give a pleasure in the closet hardly inferior to that which they produce in representation: and though

they have been superseded by an unceasing change of fashionable novelties in the theatre, they are and will continue to be familiar to every one who loves the classical literature of Italy.

It is remarkable that, in the perusal of these operas, the reader is delighted even with those things which belong entirely to their representation. He has given dignity and importance to the art of theatrical decoration; and, even in the closet, it is impossible to overlook his felicity in imagining the most convenient scenes for his incidents, his skill in giving variety to local situations, his taste in choosing such as are most delightful to the imagination, and his learning exhibited in his descriptions of the aspect and productions of various countries, and of the costumes, buildings, rites and ceremonies, of different ages and nations. His very stage-directions are full of poetry. The following (as a specimen) from *Alcide in Bivio*, is the scene of the Palace of Pleasure, into which Hercules is transported.

"Edonide conduce Alcide a seder seco in disparte: e quindi ad uno suo cenno si cangia in un istante la scena opaca e selvaggia, nell' amena e ridente reggia del Piacere. La compongono cappriciosi edifizj d' intrecciate verdure, di pellegrini frutta, e di rari e distinti fiori. Ne variano artificiosamente la vista l'ombre interette di nascenti boschetti, o la ravvivano per tutto le diverse acque, le quale o scherzano restrette ne' fonti, o serpeg-

giano cadendo fra i sassi delle muscose grotte liberamente sul prato. E populato il sito di numerose schiere di Genj e di Ninfe seguaci della Dea del Piacer, le quale e col canto e col ballo esprimono, non meno il contento dell' allegro stato in cui si ritrovano, che la varietà delle dilettevoli occupazioni che le trattengono."

A description such as this is not merely useful to the machinist and scene-painter. It is an essential part of the poem, and presents to the "mind's eye" of the reader objects as rich and beautiful as the most skilful artist could exhibit to the corporeal vision of the spectator.

His language, too, though written with a view to its fitness for musical recitation and song, is beautiful, independently of adventitious aid, and charms the reader, as well as the listener, by its purity, its elegance, the harmony of its numbers, its simplicity and clearness, and its variety and force of expression. His subjects are generally well chosen; being founded, for the most part, on some striking historical incident. He rejected the mythological and fabulous extravagancies of his predecessors, as well as their incongruous buffoonery, and brought the lyrical drama close to the confines of tragedy. Some of his operas, indeed, are taken from the master-pieces of the French stage; as his *Clemenza di Tito* (though with a change of characters) from the *Cinna* of Corneille, and his sacred drama of *Gioas* from the *Athalie* of Racine.

His works, like those of every other voluminous writer, are very unequal in merit. His best dramas were produced during the earlier part of his residence at Vienna. In his later works a decay of vigour is perceptible; and *Ruggiero*, his last opera, is his feeblest. Among all his productions his *Attilio Regolo* was always his own favourite; and he said, that were all his works to be destroyed but one, this was the piece which he would wish to save. Some of his other operas have been more frequently set to music, and more popular on the stage; but none of them is calculated, in the perusal, to give a higher idea of his powers as a tragic poet. It is full of moral grandeur mingled with the deepest pathos.

When the celebrated Hasse was about to set this opera for the Dresden theatre, in 1749, he wrote to the author, soliciting his counsels as to the composition of the music. Metastasio was himself an accomplished musician. He had a great genius for the art, which he cultivated by study under some of the most distinguished masters, particularly Porpora. Some of his little compositions have been preserved, and are proofs of the elegance of his taste. He played well on the harpsichord, and was in the habit of singing his airs, while writing them, to melodies of his own, by way of trying their musical capabilities; but it does not appear that he made any other use of his musical talent, except giving the composers who set his

dramas the most refined and judicious suggestions. Many such are to be found in his correspondence, and especially his letter to Hasse in answer to that composer's application for his advice as to the music of *Attilio Regolo*. This letter is worthy of the utmost attention from every dramatic composer. It shows how deeply the musician should consider the spirit and design of the poet, and how carefully he ought to examine the peculiar features of every person of the drama, so as to put into his mouth a musical language in harmony with his character. The illustrations of the manner of employing the orchestra in the accompaniment of recitative, too, are invaluable, and not in the least affected by any changes in the use of the instruments that have subsequently taken place.

"I shall begin," says Metastasio, "by developing the characters, which perhaps are not expressed in so lively a manner in the piece as I have conceived them in my mind.

"In *Regulus* it has been my intention to delineate the character of a Roman hero of consummate virtue, according to the Pagan idea, not only in principle but practice; whose fortitude has been long tried and is proof against every caprice of fortune. A strict and scrupulous observer as well of justice and probity as of the laws and customs which time and the great authority of his ancestors have rendered sacred to his country: sensible to all the gentler passions of humanity, but superior to each:

a great commander, a good citizen, an affectionate parent, but never considering these characters as distinct from his country, or as being otherwise among the blessings or evils of life, than as they eventually contribute to the welfare or injury of that community of which he was a part: a love of glory, but regarding it merely as a reward to which individuals should aspire by sacrificing their own interest and happiness to the general good.

"With these internal qualities, I attribute to my chief character a majestic exterior, but without pomp; I make his deportment reflecting but serene; authoritative but humane; equal, considerate, and composed. I should not wish his voice or gestures to be violent, except in two or three situations in the opera, in which a sensible deviation from the constant tenor of his subsequent conduct would exalt his ruling passions, patriotism and love of glory.

"In the character of the consul, *Manlius*, I have endeavoured to represent one of those great men who, while possessed of every civil and military virtue, suffer themselves to be carried away by the rage of emulation beyond all warrantable bounds. I wish this contrast to be strongly marked, as well as his hostile spirit towards *Regulus*. These will appear in the first scene with *Attilia*, as well as in the beginning of the next, in which the senate hears *Regulus* and the Carthaginian ambassadors. His subsequent change of sentiment into respect and tenderness for *Regulus*, will render his character

more admirable and pleasing; it will exalt the virtue of *Regulus* by demonstrating its efficacy in producing so striking an effect, and will add strength to the second scene of the second act, which is that to which I am most partial. The characteristic of *Manlius* is a natural propensity to emulation, which, when he discovers, he corrects but does not relinquish.

"*Publius* is a young lion that promises all the strength of his sire, but is not yet furnished with tusks and claws; and, through the impetuosity, passion, and inexperience of youth, it may be conjectured what he will be when he arrives at maturity.

"*Amilcar* is an African, little accustomed to the maxims of probity and justice which the Romans at this time professed, and still less to their practice: hence, from the beginning, he remains astonished and unable to comprehend a mode of thinking so different from that of his country. He is, however, ambitious of imitating what he sees; but, for want of moderation, acquits himself awkwardly. However, during his short residence at Rome, if he did not acquire the Roman virtue, he at least learned to envy those who possessed it.

"The ruling passion of *Attilia* is tenderness and veneration for her father, whom she not only prefers to her lover but to Rome itself. Convinced by authority and example, she at length adopts her father's sentiments; but in the trial of fortitude which she wishes to imitate, she manifestly sinks

under the weakness of her sex. In *Barces*, I figured to myself a pleasing, beautiful, and lively African. Her temperament, like that of her nation, is amorous, and her tenderness for *Amilcar* extreme. She is even more attached to her lover than to the manners of her country; and is not only more indifferent than him about the Roman passion for glory, but thanks the gods for having preserved her from its contagion.

"These are the general outlines of the portraits I meant to draw; but you know the pencil is not always faithful to the traces of the mind. It therefore depends on you, who are not only an excellent artist but a perfect friend, to clothe my personages in so masterly a manner, that if their features should not strike, they may be recognised at least by their dress and ornaments.

"And now, to come to particulars, according to your desire, I shall speak of the recitatives, some of which I should wish to be animated by instruments. But in pointing them out, I do not pretend to limit your ideas. Where mine meet your own, adopt them; but where we disagree, I beg of you not to change your opinion in mere complacency to me.

"In the first act, I find two situations in which instruments may assist me. The first is the whole speech of *Regulus* to *Manlius*, in the second scene, beginning, 'A che vengo? Ah, fino a quando?' After the words 'A che vengo,' the instruments should begin to be heard; and afterwards, some-

times silent, sometimes accompanying the voice, they should give energy and fire to the impassioned sentiments of the speaker. And I should like this accompaniment to continue to the end of the verse, 'La barbara or qual è, Cartago, o Roma?' But I believe it will be necessary to avoid the inconvenience of making the singer wait for the chord, otherwise all the warmth and energy of the speech would be chilled, and the instruments, instead of animating, would enfeeble the recitative, and render the picture disjointed, confused, and indistinct. Here, I should think, all *ritornelli*, or interstitial symphonies, should be avoided.

"The other situation is in the seventh scene of the same act; and is one of those places where I should wish *Regulus* to quit his moderation and think more of himself than usual. There are only twelve verses that I should wish to have accompanied; they begin at 'Io venissi a tradarvi,' and end with 'Come al nome di Roma Africa tremi.' If you should think accompaniment necessary here, I recommend the same economy of time as before, that the actor may not be embarrassed or obliged to wait, by which that fire would be diminished which I would have increased, by the use of the instruments.

"And now we are speaking of the seventh scene of the first act, if you have no objection, I should wish to have a very short symphony after this verse of *Manlius*, 'T'acheta; ei viene;' to give time

for the consul and senators to take their places, and allow Regulus leisure to advance slowly and pensively. The character of the symphony should be majestic, slow, and sometimes interrupted; expressing, as it were, the state of *Regulus's* mind in now entering that place as a slave, in which he formerly presided as consul. I should wish, that, during one of the breaks in this symphony, *Amilcar* should come in to speak; when, during the silence of the instruments, he should utter these verses,

> 'Regolo, a che t'arresti? E forse nuovo
> Per te questo soggiorno?'

and the symphony should not be concluded till after *Regulus's* answer, 'Penso qual ne partii, qual vi ritorno.' But after these words, I should not wish the instruments to perform anything more than a mere close.

"In the second act there seems to me no other recitative which requires accompaniment than the soliloquy of *Regulus*, which begins thus, 'Tu palpiti, O mio cor!' This ought to be recited sitting, till after the words, 'Ah no! De' vili questo è il linguaggio.' The rest to be delivered standing; because the exit of *Regulus* happens at the change of scene. But in order that he may have time and space to move about slowly, stopping from time to time, as if immersed in thought, it is necessary that the instruments should introduce and second his reflections. While the actor is sitting, as his reflections consist of doubt and hesitation, they will afford

an opportunity for extraneous modulation and short *ritornelli* for the instruments. But the instant he rises, the rest of the scene requires resolution and energy; so that I recur to my former wish for economy of time.

"Though there are places in the third act, as well as in the other two, which I may have neglected to mention, where violins may be opportunely employed, yet I must observe, that this ornament should not be rendered too familiar: and I should be glad, if, in this third act particularly, no accompanied recitative occurred till the last scene. This is prevented by the noise and tumult of the people, who cry out 'Regolo, resti!' The noise of these cries ought to be great, to imitate reality, and to show what a respectful silence the mere presence of *Regulus* could obtain from a whole tumultuous multitude. The instruments should be silent when the other personages speak; and, if you approve of it, may be employed whenever *Regulus* speaks in the *last scene:* varying, however, the movement and modulation, not merely to express and enforce the words or sentiments, as is thought a great merit by other composers, but to paint also the situation and mind of the person who utters them, at which such masters as you always aspire. For you know as well as I, that the same words and sentiments may be uttered, according to the diversity of situation, in such a manner as to express either joy, sorrow, anger, or pity. I should hope that, from

such hands as yours, a recitative, always accompanied by instruments would not be such a tiresome thing as it usually is, from others; in the first place, because you will preserve that economy of time which I have so much recommended; and as you likewise know so well how to perfect the art, by the judicious use of *pianos* and *fortes*, by *rinforzandos*, by *staccatos*, *appogiaturas*, acceleration and retardation of the measure, trills, *sostenutos*, and, above all, by new modulation, of which you are acquainted with all the mysteries.

"I should wish that the last chorus were one of that kind to which you have imparted an interest unknown before; and that there should be such a stamp set on the 'Addio!' with which the Romans take a final leave of *Regulus*, as shall show that this chorus is not, like most others, a superfluity, but a most essential part of the catastrophe."

The music of Hasse to *Attilio Regolo*, in the composition of which he had the benefit of these admirable counsels, is among the finest of his works. It had the greatest success at Dresden, and continued to be performed in Italy and Germany for several years, till it was superseded by the still more powerful music of Jomelli. *Attilio Regolo* was performed in London, with Jomelli's music, in 1754; and Serafini, who performed the part of *Regulus* was always encored in the recitative in the last scene, mentioned in the above letter. This recitative does not require the aid of music or thea-

trical action to be looked upon as one of the noblest and most pathetic passages to be found in dramatic poetry.

"Romani, addio. Siano i congedi estremi
Degni di noi. Lode agli Dei, vi lascio,
E vi lascio Romani. Ah, conservate
Illibato il gran nome: e voi sarete
Gli arbitri della terra; e il mondo intero
Roman diventerà. Numi custodi
Di quest' almo terren! Dee protettrici
Del stirpe d'Enea, confido a voi
Questo popol d'eroi; sian vostra cura
Questo sol, queste tetti, e queste mura.
Fate che sempre in esse
La costanza, la fè, la gloria alberghi,
La giustizia, il valore. E, se giammai
Minaccia il Campidoglio
Alcun astro maligno influssi rei,
Ecco Regolo, O Dei! Regolo solo
Sia la vittima vostra; e si consumi
Tutta l'ira del ciel sul capo mio:
Ma Roma illesa——ah, quì si piange! Addio."

In *La Clemenza di Tito*, with what beautiful colours has the poet painted the godlike "quality of mercy;" and with what exquisite skill has he represented the mind of *Titus* as filled with tenderness even to overflowing, and yet preserving all the dignity and firmness becoming his lofty station! How finely is his character contrasted with that of the violent and impetuous Vitellia, and the guilty yet ingenuous Sextus. That heart must be cold which does not glow with emotion, even in perusing the scene in which the repentant criminal is

brought before his sovereign—a scene which, says Voltaire, is worthy of Corneille when he is not declamatory, and of Racine when he is not feeble.

In the "Osservazione sopra i Drammi dell' Abate Metastasio," published at Nice in 1785, there is the following passage in relation to this opera: "In the *Clemenza di Tito*, as in some of his other works, Metastasio has dared to beat down the idol to which modern music has offered so much incense, namely, the *Duet*. We applaud his boldness. The fierce and furious Vitellia was not permitted to warble along with the foolish Sextus or the gentle Titus. But if this opera is again brought on the stage in our time, who knows what nonsense may be introduced into it by the tribe of stage-poets, here to supply a duet, there to introduce a *rondeau*, now in compliance with the dictates of caprice, and now to satisfy the demands of ignorance!" All this has actually taken place. The *Clemenza di Tito*, as set by Mozart, contains many interpolations such as above described. The first scene, for example, in which Vitellia instigates Sextus to join the conspiracy against the emperor, concludes with the following words, intended to be delivered in recitative;

"*Sesto.* Tutto, tutto farò. Prescrivi, imponi,
Regola i moti miei:
Tu la mia sorte, il mio destin tu sei.

Vitellia. Prima che il sol tramonti
Voglio Tito svenato, e voglio—."

But, in Mozart's opera, this brief and hasty conclusion of the colloquy, thus suddenly broken off, is amplified into the long and elaborate duet beginning, "Come ti piace, imponi;" in utter violation of dramatic propriety. The love scene between Annio and Servilia concludes with the beautiful lines, beginning

"Ah, perdona al primo affetto,"

tenderly addressed by the lover to his mistress. But, instead of this, in Mozart's opera, there is a long duet, in which the lovers first express the same sentiments alternately, and then speak them both together. The exquisite beauty of Mozart's music in this duet, is universally acknowledged; but yet everybody must have felt, while it was singing, that Annio and Servilia vanished from their presence, and that they thought of nothing but the sweet warbling of Signor A. and Signora B. In the noble scene which has been already mentioned, between Titus and Sextus, the latter, on retiring from the emperor's presence, makes an appeal to his old friendship, in the most simple and affecting language,—

"Per questo istante solo
Ricordati, Signor, l'amor primiero," &c.

The music here ought to be as short and simple as the words; for Sextus is in no condition to *expatiate* before his sovereign and his judge. But we have a long *aria* in two movements, the last of which is a florid

rondeau. There are a number of other alterations and interpolations; and the concerted piece which forms the finale, beginning "Tu, è ver, m'assolvi, Augusto," is not to be found in Metastasio.

It is not to be understood, however, from the above-quoted remark of the Italian critic, that Metastasio entirely rejected the use of the duet. He only avoided its abuse. There are many duets in his operas; but they are introduced sparingly, and always with strict attention to dramatic propriety; being constructed in the colloquial form, and having those passages, in which the voices join, made very brief. As to trios, quartets, and *concerted pieces*, they were utterly unknown in the musical tragedy of his day. Choruses are used by him only in scenes where a multitude of people can be introduced with propriety; and their rarity adds to the greatness of their effect.

Perhaps the most deeply interesting of all these dramas is *L'Olimpiade.* It is not only beautiful as a whole, but contains some of the purest gems of Metastasio's poetry. The character of Megacles is a divine picture of heroic friendship. Loving and beloved, he determines to sacrifice his mistress to his friend; and yet feels less for his own wretchedness than for his Aristea's sorrow when she shall hear that he is gone. What sadness in his parting words to the friend for whom he abandons all that is dear to him!—

"Se cerca, se dice,
L'amico dov' è?

L'amico infelice,
Rispondi, mori.
Ah no! sì gran duolo
Non darle per me:
Rispondi, ma solo,
Piangendo partì.
Che abisso di pene!
Lasciare il suo bene,
Lasciarlo per sempre,
Lasciarlo così."

A perfect example of a duet is to be found in this opera. Megacles, who has undertaken to enter the lists for his friend, in the games in which the fair Aristea is to be the reward of the victor, discovers that this Aristea is the mistress whom he himself adores. She, believing that it is for love of her that he has enrolled himself among the competitors, expresses the tender feelings inspired by his devotion, to which he responds with equal tenderness; but his countenance, manner, and incoherent expressions, betray the grief and disturbance of his mind. Aristea, alarmed at his appearance, expresses her uneasiness, and tenderly inquires the cause of his agitation: and Megacles, unable to bear his own distracted thoughts and the sight of his mistress's distress, leaves her, overcome with anxious forebodings. The conclusion of this scene is contained in the following duet, which shows how this form of musical dialogue can be rendered natural and dramatic, as well as beautiful.

" *Megacle.* Ne' giorni tuoi felici
Ricordati di me.

Aristea. Perchè così mi dici,
Anima mia, perchè?
Megacle. Taci, bel idol mio.
Aristea. Parla, mio dolce amor.
Megacle. Ah! che parlando
Aristea. Ah! che tacendo } Oh Dio!
Tu mi traffigi il cor!
Aristea (*aparte*). Veggio languir chi adoro
Ne intendo il suo languir!
Megacle (*aparte*). Di gelosia mi moro,
E non lo posso dir!
Megacle. Chi mai provò di questo
Aristea. Affanno piu funesto
Più barbaro dolor?"

Metastasio's poetry exhibits innumerable traces of his familiarity with the beauties of ancient literature. The following air, in this opera, sung by Megacles, is an instance:

"Lo seguitai felice
Quand' era il ciel sereno,
Alle tempeste in seno
Voglio seguirlo ancor.
Come del' oro il fuoco
Scopre le masse impure,
Scoprono le sventure
De' falsi amici il cor."

We have here the sentiment in the following verses of Ovid, expressed with more elegance than in the original.

"Dum juvat, et vultu ridet fortuna sereno
Indelibatas cuncta sequuntur opes;
Scilicet, ut fulvum spectatur in ignibus aurum,
Tempore sic duro est inspicienda fides."*

* *Trist. lib.* i. *eleg.* 5.

The morality of this great poet is always lofty and beautiful. He does not love the darkest shades of human character. Even his vicious personages are rescued from unmitigated hatred or scorn by traits of feeling, or nobleness of mind, contending with the influence of evil passions. But no one has painted virtue in more glowing and captivating colours. What can be more sublime than the heroism of his Regulus and Cato? What more noble than the magnanimity of Titus, or more pathetic than the tender and devoted friendship of Megacles? His dramas are full of these exalted views of man's nature. When Themistocles, banished by his ungrateful countrymen, takes refuge at the court of the Persian king, Xerxes offers him the means of revenge by placing him at the head of the immense army assembled for the invasion of Greece. The Athenian refuses to be the foe of his country. "E che tant' ami in lei?"—"What can *you* love in your country?"—is the question of the angry monarch;—and how exquisite is the answer!—

> "Tutto, O Signor: le ceneri degli avi,
> Le sacre leggi, i tutelari Numi;
> La favella, i costumi;
> Il sudor che mi costa;
> Lo splendor che ne trassi;
> L'aria, i tronchi, i terren, le mura, i sassi."

One of Metastasio's beauties lies in the reflections and in the felicity with which they generally

flow from the circumstances of the scene. Timantes, about to die, naturally meditates on the vanity of human life. How full of matter are his thoughts, and yet how simple his expressions!—"Why," he asks, "why wish for life?"—

"Perchè bramar la vita? e qual piacere
In lei si trova? Ogni fortuna è pena;
E miseria ogni età; Tremiam fanciulli
D'un guardo al minacciar: Siam gioci, adulti,
Di fortuna e d'amor. Or ne trafigge
La brama d'ottenere: or ne tormenta
Di perdere il timore. Eterna guerra
Hanno i rei con se stessi: i giusti l'hanno
Coll' invidia e la frode: ombre, deliri,
Sogni, follie son nostre cure, e quando
Il vergognoso errore
A scoprir s'incomincia, allor si muore."

With all their beauties, however, the dramas of Metastasio are chargeable with many faults. He has introduced *Love* to an immoderate and absurd extent. In every one of his pieces love is a principal feature—even in those, such as *Catone*, *Temistocle*, and *Attilio Regolo*, where it seems most out of place. Sometimes there are three or four love affairs in one piece; and in *Semiramide* all the characters are in love. Love is frequently introduced by him, not as the primary passion on which the subject of the piece hangs, but in a sort of subordinate and episodical way, as if in mere compliance with theatrical usage: and in these cases it is necessarily cold, languid, and insipid. What

interest can anybody take in the affected sighs and languishments of Amenossi, Barsene, Cleofile, Megabise, Selene, Tamiri, and others, who are in love purely for form's sake; "in the same way," says Arteaga,* "as Don Quixote was in love with Dulcinea del Toboso, whom he had never seen and knew nothing of, solely that he might conform to the laws of chivalry, which required that every knight should have a lady of his love." Who cares for the languid passion of Barce, in conjunction with the sublime self-devotion of Regulus — the imbecile gallantry of Xerxes, beside the incomparable nobleness of Themistocles—or the frigid jealousy of Arbaces, alongside of the "indomitable will" of Cato? Such personages as these, with their puling and mincing sentimentalities, provoke only impatience or ridicule.

This constant introduction of love gives an effeminate and affected air even to characters in themselves noble and striking. It is preposterous to make Amilcar, the Carthaginian envoy to Rome, in the midst of the momentous affairs of his mission, employ himself in "sighing like furnace" for the charms of a slave, under the very eyes of the stern and austere Romans; to make Fulvius, sent to decide the dispute between Cæsar and Cato, which involved the destinies of the world, fall in love with Pompey's widow, and assail her with a profusion of gallantries and soft speeches; and to make Cæsar

* *Rivoluzioni del Teatro Italiano.*

himself address a fair one in the language of an Arcadian shepherd. And, to make the matter still worse, all the personages, however different in country, age, station, or character, make use in their love-dialogues of one unvarying phraseology, filled with a sickly repetition of amorous commonplace and hackneyed terms of endearment. Even Polyphemus himself exhales his sighs for the fair Galatea in the following *arietta;*

" Mio cor, tu prendi a scherno
E folgori, e procelle,
E poi due luci belle
Ti fanno palpitar.
Qual nuovo moto interno
Prendi da quei sembianti?
Quai non usati incanti
T' insegnano tremar?"

Had Metastasio, like the English poet, formed to himself the image of the giant Cyclop roaring out, before he began his love-ditty,

" Bring me a hundred reeds, of proper growth,
To make a pipe for my capacious mouth,"

he would not have put into that " capacious mouth" a delicate sentimental effusion, in the style of Tibullus or Petrarch.

This conventional love, which enters so largely into Metastasio's operas, has the necessary effect of making his language forced and artificial—full of the cold suggestions of the fancy instead of the warm impulses of the heart. Hence we find his

heroes and heroines, when supposed to be under the influence of the most agitating feelings, amusing themselves with making strings of ingenious similes —comparing themselves to ships beat by the waves, streams dashed against the rocks, flowers, or turtle-doves; and tracing the points of resemblance through a dozen labouring lines. What can be more intolerable than the following frozen conceit, uttered, too, by a passionate lover? When Fulvius, in *Catone*, makes an untimely declaration of his love to Emilia, she answers him,

> " Qual mai può darti
> Speranza una infelice
> Cinta di bruno ammanto,
> Coll' odio in petto, e sulle ciglie il pianto?"

And he replies,

> " Piangendo ancora
> Rinascer suole
> La bella aurora
> Nunzia del sole;
> E pur conduce
> Sereno il dì."

Could it be believed that the poet should have made the lover reply to so simple and affecting an appeal by such a piece of double-refined nonsense?

This appears to be Metastasio's greatest fault, and that for which he is most liable to censure; for it was voluntary and might have been avoided. His other defects, the want of individuality and

historic truth in his characters, the frequent improbability of his incidents, and the deficiency of variety in his denouements, arose from the nature of the musical drama, and the restraints under which he laboured; and, after all, he is in need of less indulgence for them than what might reasonably be allowed him.

In his own department of the drama, Metastasio stands alone and unrivalled. He is the Shakspeare of the Italian opera, and has surpassed all who have followed him, as well as all who have gone before him. "Sans modele, dans sa carrière," says Sismondi, "il s'est trouvé aussi sans imitateurs. Tous les jours de nouveaux opéras serieux sont fournis aux compositeurs et présentés au public, et pas un seul ne peut soutenir la lecture; pas un seul auteur ne s'est fait seulement la réputation d'esprit et de goût dans un genre qui a donné à Metastase une place parmi les plus grands poètes."

CHAPTER XV.

Goldoni.

METASTASIO is the only poet who has achieved greatness by devoting himself exclusively or chiefly to the musical drama. Several eminent Italian writers, however, may be mentioned as having occasionally turned their attention to this branch of literature, in the earlier part of the last century. Marcello, the celebrated composer of the Psalms, wrote two operas, *La fede Riconosciuta* and *Arata in Sparta*, about the year 1710. Count Scipio Maffei, the author of the tragedy of *Merope*, wrote an elegant pastoral opera, *La Ninfa fida*. Signora Gozzi, a Venetian lady of distinguished literary attainments, who published a collection of the poetry of the most celebrated women in Italy, is the author of two operas, *Agide Rè di Sparta* and *L'Elenia*, performed at Venice in 1725 and 1730. Count Durazzo wrote *L'Innocenza giustificata* for the debût of the famous singer Gabrielli. It was performed a hundred times successively. Of Calsabigi, the

fellow-labourer of Gluck, we shall have occasion to speak in conjunction with that composer. Goldoni requires especial notice as an opera writer, though his fame does not rest upon what he has done in this department of the drama.

Goldoni was born at Venice in 1707. He received a liberal education, having been intended for the profession of the law; but his propensity for the theatre, which he showed at a very early age, withdrew him from every other pursuit. Before he was eight years old he wrote a sketch of a comedy, so ingeniously planned and so full of humour, that his friends could hardly believe it was the production of a child. Having finished his studies for the bar he began to practise in the courts of Venice, and was afterwards appointed secretary to the Venetian resident at Milan. Here he became acquainted with the manager of the theatre, for whom he wrote several dramatic pieces. By degrees he abandoned his other occupations, and became for life a dramatic author by profession.

His first attempt was a musical tragedy, called *Amalasonte*, which he carried with him to Milan, entertaining the highest hopes of its success. On his way to Milan he stopped at Vicenza, where he showed his piece to Count Trissino, (a relative of the celebrated author of *Sophonisba,)* whom he had formerly known at Venice. The count "damned it with faint praise," and advised the author to adhere to comedy. He arrived at Milan at the time

of the carnival, when the opera-house was open. Being previously acquainted with some of the performers, particularly the celebrated singer Caffariello, (or Caffarelli,) he was invited to a party, at which he read his piece. The event is amusingly related in his memoirs.

" The company continued to increase ; Caffariello made his appearance, saw and recognised me, saluted me with the air of an Alexander, and took his seat by the lady of the house. A few minutes afterwards, Colonel Prata, one of the directors of the theatre, a man very conversant with the affairs of the drama, was announced. Madame Grossatesta (the mistress of the house) introduced me to the count, and spoke to him of my opera. He offered to mention me to the meeting of directors, but it would give him infinite pleasure, he said, to know something of my work. I wanted nothing so much as an opportunity of reading it. A small table and candle were brought ; we sat round the table, and I began to read. I announced the title of *Amalasonte*. Caffariello sang the word, which he thought long and ridiculous. Every body laughed but myself: the lady scolded, and the nightingale ceased. I read over the names of the characters, nine in number ; here a small shrill voice, which proceeded from an old castrato who sang in the choruses and mewed like a cat, called out, ' Too many, too many ; there are at least two characters too many.' I felt very uncomfortable, and wished to give up my

reading. M. Prata desired this insolent fellow, who had not the merit of Caffariello to excuse him, to hold his tongue; and turning to me observed, 'It is true, Sir, there are usually not more than six or seven characters in a drama; but when a work is deserving of it we have no objection to be at the expense of a couple of actors more. Have the goodness to go on.' I resumed my reading. 'Act first, scene first—Clodesile and Arpagon.' Caffariello asked me the name of the first soprano in my opera. 'Sir,' said I, 'it is Clodesile.' 'What, you open the piece with the principal actor, and make him appear while the audience are coming in, seating themselves, and making a noise! Really, sir, I am not your man.' M. Prata here interposed; 'Let us see,' he said, 'whether the first scene is interesting.' I read it; and while I was going on, a little insignificant wretch drew a paper from his pocket and went to the harpsichord to try over an air in some part he had to perform. The mistress of the house was obliged to make apologies to me without intermission. At last M. Prata took me by the hand, and led me into an adjoining closet. Having begged me to be seated, he sat down by me, told me not to mind the rudeness of a set of thoughtless fools, and requested me to read my drama to him alone, that he might be able to form a judgment respecting it, and give me a sincere opinion. I thanked him for his politeness, and read the piece from beginning to end. He listened

with patience and attention ; and, when I had done, gave me his opinion nearly in the following words:

" ' It appears to me that you have tolerably well studied the poetics of Aristotle and Horace, and that you have written your piece according to the principles of tragedy. You do not seem to be aware, however, that a musical drama is an imperfect work, subject to rules and usages, destitute of common sense, I allow, but still necessary to be followed. Were you in France, you might take more pains to please the public, but here you must begin by pleasing the actors and actresses ; you must satisfy the musical composer ; you must consult the scene-painter. Every department has its rules, and it would be treason against the drama to fail in their observance. Listen, then,' he continued, ' and I shall point out to you a few of those rules which are immutable, and with which you seem to be unacquainted.

" ' The three principal personages of the drama ought to sing five airs each ; two in the first act, two in the second, and one in the third. The second actress and the second soprano can only have three ; and the inferior characters must be satisfied with a single air each, or two at the most. The author of the words must furnish the musician with the different shades which form the *chiar' oscuro* of music, and take care that two pathetic airs do not succeed each other. He must observe the same precaution in distributing the bravura airs, the airs of

action, the inferior airs, and the minuets and rondeaus. He must above all things avoid giving impassioned airs, bravura airs, or rondeaus, to inferior actors. Those poor devils must be satisfied with what they get, and every opportunity of distinguishing themselves is denied them.'

" M. Prata would have gone on, but I interrupted him. ' You have told me enough, Sir,' I said; ' do not take the trouble to enlarge further on the subject.' I thanked him again for his kindness, and took my leave."

Goldoni went home and threw his manuscript into the fire; and in doing so doubtless acted wisely.

His first production that was brought upon the stage was *Belisario*, a tragi-comedy, which was performed at Venice in November 1734, with great success; and his reputation was still further increased by the appearance of two comic *intermezzi*, or interludes, called *La Pupilla* and *La Birba*. The manager of the theatre determined, at this time, to bring out Apostolo Zeno's opera of *Griselda*, the music of which was to be composed by the Abbé Vivaldi, called *Il prete rosso*, from his red hair, and better known in Italy by that *sobriquet* than by his real name.

" This ecclesiastic," says Goldoni in his memoirs, " who was an excellent performer on the violin and an indifferent composer, had trained and instructed in singing Mademoiselle Giraud, a young singer,

the daughter of a French hairdresser, but born at Venice. She was not pretty, but graceful. Her shape was elegant, her eyes and hair beautiful, and her mouth charming: she had little voice, but a great deal of action. She was to represent *Griselda*.

"M. Grimani, the proprietor of the theatre, sent me to the musicians to make the necessary changes in the opera, both for the sake of shortening it, and changing the position and character of the airs to suit the actors and the composer. I waited, therefore, on the Abbé Vivaldi, and announced myself as having come from Signor Grimani. I found him surrounded with music, and with his breviary in his hand. He rose, made the sign of the cross, put aside his breviary, and then, after the usual compliments, asked the purpose of my visit. 'Signor Grimani,' I said, 'has employed me to make such changes as you may deem necessary in the opera about to be performed; I therefore wish to be informed, Sir, what are your wishes?'—'So, so; you are employed to make the changes in the opera of *Griselda;* M. Lalli, then, is not now attached to M. Grimani's theatre?'—'M. Lalli, who is very old, will always enjoy the profits of the dedications and the sale of the books, which I do not care for. I shall have pleasure in executing a task which will be amusing to me, and I shall be happy to begin under the orders of M. Vivaldi.' (The abbé resumed his breviary, crossed himself again,

and made me no answer.) 'Sir,' I said, 'I should be sorry to withdraw you from your religious contemplations; I will wait upon you another time.'—'I know very well, my dear sir,' said the abbé, 'that you have talents for poetry. I have seen your *Belisarius* with a great deal of pleasure. But this is a very different affair. One may make a tragedy, or even an epic poem if you will, and yet not be able to write a single musical stanza.'—'Be so good as to allow me to look at your drama.'—'O yes, with all my heart—where is *Griselda* gone to? It was here—*Deus in adjutorium meum intende—Domine—Domine—Domine*—it was here this very instant—*Domine ad adjuvandum*—ah, here it is. See, sir, this scene between Gualtiero and Griselda is very interesting. The author has tacked a pathetic air to it, but Mlle. Giraud is not fond of languishing songs; she wants something expressive and full of agitation;—an expression of the passions by various means; by words interrupted, for example, by sighs, with action and motion—I don't know whether you understand me.'—'O yes, sir, I understand you very well: besides, I have had the honour of hearing Mlle. Giraud sing, and I know that her voice is not very powerful.'—'What, sir, do you mean to insult my pupil? She is fit for anything—she can sing anything.'—'Well, sir, I have no doubt you are right; pray give me the book, and allow me to proceed.'—'No, sir, I cannot part with it; I am in want of it, and am pressed

for time.'—'Very well, sir, if you are pressed, lend it me for a moment, and I will instantly satisfy you?' —'Instantly?'—'Yes, sir, instantly.'

"The abbé, with a sneer at my presumption, gave me the book, with paper and ink, resumed his breviary, and walked about the room reciting his hymns and psalms. I read over the scene, with which I was already acquainted; I considered what was requisite for the musician, and in less than a quarter of an hour I wrote down an air of eight lines, divided into two parts. I then called my ecclesiastic, and showed him my work. Vivaldi read it, his countenance brightened up; he read again, threw down his prayer-book and called Mlle. Giraud. When she came in, he exclaimed, 'Ah, here is a wonderful man, here is an excellent poet; read this air:—this gentleman has just composed it without stirring from the spot, in less than a quarter of an hour.' Then turning to me, he begged my pardon and embraced me, protesting he would never have any other poet. He gave me the drama, with directions to make some other changes, with all which he was perfectly satisfied; and the opera succeeded admirably."

His celebrated comic opera *La Buona Figliuola* was written at Parma in 1755. It was taken from his own comedy of *Pamela*, which, again, was founded upon Richardson's novel. The music, at this time, was composed by Duni; but, says the author, "*La Buona Figliuola* was more fortunate

in the hands of Piccini, who, being employed for a comic opera at Rome, several years afterwards, preferred this old drama to all the new ones offered to him."

In 1762 Goldoni went to Paris, in which city he passed the remainder of his life. He was engaged for two years to write dramatic pieces for the Italian theatre. At the end of that period he was about to return to Italy, when he was urged to become Italian master to the princesses of France, the aunts of Louis XV. Soon afterwards he suddenly lost his sight, but recovered the use of one of his eyes. At the end of three years, he received, by way of payment for his instructions, the sum of a hundred louis in a gold box, and a pension of four thousand livres. This, with the profits derived from his works, was sufficient for the wants of himself and his wife, in their quiet and retired way of life described in his Memoirs.

In 1783 he was invited to London by the managers of the Italian opera. He declined leaving Paris, but accepted an engagement on condition of being allowed to remain there. He was employed to write a comic opera, and to arrange the old dramas which were to be performed during the season. This correspondence was continued for several years. When it terminated he received a mark of the satisfaction of the managers, who paid him for an opera which it was impossible for them to use. "The management," he gallantly says in

his Memoirs, "was then in the hands of women, and women are amiable in every country." One of the pieces written for London was a comic opera, called *Victorina*, the music of which was composed by Piccini; "who," says Goldoni, "wrote to me from Naples that he had never read a comic drama from which he derived so much pleasure. Its success, however," he adds, "did not correspond with the expectation of the managers or my own."

After the death of Louis XV. he was appointed Italian teacher to the Princess Clotilde, afterwards Princess of Piedmont; and, after her marriage, he attended the unhappy Princess Elizabeth, the sister of Louis XVI., in the same capacity. He was deprived of his pension at the breaking out of the revolution, and reduced to a state of poverty. When Brissot and the Girondist party were in power, it was proposed to make some provision for the aged poet; but in so distracted a season it is not surprising that nothing was done in his behalf. He died in the beginning of 1793, in the eighty-sixth year of his age. In 1787 he published his *Mémoires*, written by himself; a lively and entertaining work.

Goldoni's works, which are very voluminous, consist chiefly of comedies. He began with tragedy and serious opera, but afterwards attached himself to comedy, as being more suited to his genius. His serious operas are only three in number, *Orontes*, *Gustavus Adolphus*, and *Statira*; all written for

the theatre of Venice, and composed by Galuppi. His comic operas amount to nearly fifty. They are in general slight productions, full of farce and buffoonery, and that kind of broad humour which is peculiar to the Italians; but admirably adapted to the light, airy, and grotesque music of the Italian *opera buffa*.

CHAPTER XVI.

State of the Italian opera in the earlier part of the 18th century —Great composers—Leo—Vinci—Sarro—Porpora—Rinaldo di Capua—Pergolesi—Hasse—Domenico Scarlatti—Feo—Galuppi—Terradellas—Perez—Logroscino.

At the same time that the poetry of the Italian opera was refined and exalted by the writings of Apostolo Zeno and Metastasio, its music was undergoing a similar process by the labours of Alessandro Scarlatti, Caldara, and the other composers who have been already mentioned as having flourished at the beginning of the eighteenth century. These composers set the example of freeing dramatic music from the complication of fugues, canons, and harmonical contrivances, with which every description of music had previously been encumbered. They discovered that the essence of dramatic music consisted in melody and expression. They established the distinctions between recitative and air; gave to each of these species of musical language its peculiar features, and assigned to it its proper functions.

Their successors proceeded in the same course.

Leonardo Leo added grace and melody to the airs, and richness and brilliancy to their accompaniments. Vinci increased the energy of dramatic language by means of the *recitativo obbligato*, or accompanied recitative ; and further improvements were made in this department by Porpora and Rinaldo di Capua ; —the one having given greater variety to the phrases and greater facility to the cantilena, while the other heightened its effect by the instrumental accompaniments. Pergolesi carried melody to as great a degree of perfection as it perhaps has yet reached. From his grand and simple style, strong and natural expression, unity of design, beauty, and grace, this composer has very happily been called the Raphael of music. About this time a host of great musicians flourished almost contemporaneously, among whom may be enumerated Domenico Scarlatti, Hasse, Perez, Terradellas, Galuppi, Sarro, and Mancini ; and the period to which they belong has been called by Arteaga, and other critics, the golden age of the Italian musical drama.

Nothing contributed more to the elevation of music at that period than the number of excellent singers. In the general improvement of taste, the art of singing had arrived at a high degree of purity. The singers had acquired a simple and natural style, exquisite skill in the management of the voice, and perfect intonation. Expression was the great object of their study ; and they had not

yet learned to consider the execution of bravura passages as the perfection of the vocal art. Embellishments were valued only as being the means of expression: and the singer studied to accommodate the musical accents to the prosody of the language in such a manner, that the poetry was recited with proper emphasis and distinct pronunciation. Dramatic action, too, was carefully studied; and many performers of that day appear to have deserved eulogies as glowing as that bestowed by the *Spectator* upon Nicolini.

There were, at that period, excellent vocal schools in several of the principal cities of Italy. At Rome, from that city being the chief seat of the performance of sacred music, the utmost purity of execution, and nicety in the management of the voice, were particularly studied. The celebrated masters, Fedi and Amadori, were accustomed to carry their pupils to a place without the walls of Rome, where there was a remarkable echo, which repeated the same sound a number of times: and there, in imitation of Demosthenes, they were exercised in singing to the echo, which, by its repetition of their tones, admonished them of their defects. The schools of Bologna, Naples, Venice, Milan, and Florence, were also celebrated, and produced many great disciples.

The principal female singers of that period were Signora Tesi, who was esteemed the first actress of the age, Marianna Bulgarini, the friend of Metas-

tasio, Faustina, Cuzzoni, Mingotti, and Gabrielli. Among the men were Farinelli, (probably the greatest singer that has ever existed,) Caffarelli, Gizziello, Guarducci, Mancini, Carestini, and Senesino.

Besides the above, many other eminent composers and performers flourished during this "golden age" of the Italian opera; but the names which have been enumerated appear to be the most worthy of commemoration.

Leonardo Leo was born at Naples in 1694, and became principal organist in the chapel royal of that city. According to Burney, his first opera, *Sofonisba,* was performed at Naples in 1718, and his last, *Siface,* at Bologna in 1737. He was possessed of great versatility of talent; being not only a great composer for the church, but equally successful in the serious and the comic opera. His first opera in the comic style is called *Cioè;* its subject being the absurdity of a man who has the habit of adding "Cioè," or, "That is to say," to everything he says, and puzzles everybody about him by his explanations. It is described as being very lively and humorous; and it was very popular, not only at Naples, where it was first represented, but all over Italy.

Leo was the founder of a school of singing at Naples, which produced many great performers. As a composer, his labours conduced greatly to the progress of the art. He is remarkable for the purity

of his harmony and the elegant simplicity of his melody, which he contributed to clear from the stiff and formal divisions with which it had been previously encumbered. He composed the music to several of Metastasio's operas; particularly the *Olimpiade* and *Artaserse*. His biographers enumerate among his works sixteen serious operas, besides several comic operas and *intermezzi*. He died at Naples in 1745, at the age of fifty-one. His death was occasioned by an apparently trifling circumstance. Having a small tumour, or wen, upon his cheek, he was advised to have it taken off; but, owing to the unskilfulness of the operator, or a bad habit of body, a mortification ensued, which caused his death.

Leonardo Vinci was born at Naples in 1690. When a boy, he is said to have run away from the Conservatorio of *Gli Poveri in Giesu Cristo*, where he was a scholar, in consequence of a quarrel with Porpora, with whom his rivalry appears to have continued in after life. When yet very young, he was engaged, on the strength of his early reputation, to compose an opera for Rome, and succeeded, by his *Semiramide*, in satisfying the fastidious audience of that city. In 1725 he produced his *Siface* at Venice, and had the satisfaction of seeing that opera preferred to the *Siroe* of his rival Porpora. In 1726 he composed the music of Metastasio's *Didone Abbandonata* for Rome, which established his reputation. The pub-

lic were struck, not only with the beauty of the airs, but with the extraordinary power and dramatic effect of the accompanied recitatives. "Virgil himself," says Count Algarotti, "would have been pleased to hear a composition so animated and so terrible, in which the heart and soul were at once assailed by all the powers of music." This opera is considered as the masterpiece of the composer. His music to the *Artaserse* of Metastasio, also composed at Rome, was performed in England; where the air, "Vo solcando un mar crudele," originally composed for Carestini, was long popular.

Vinci's death was tragical. While he was in the height of his success at Rome, he became attached to a lady of distinguished rank and great beauty, who, it is said, returned his passion. Having been foolish and unmanly enough to boast of her favours, she took her revenge, in the true Italian spirit, by presenting him with a poisoned cup of chocolate. He was thus cut off in the year 1732, in his forty-second year.

Domenico Sarro was another of the early reformers of dramatic music, and much esteemed both for his ecclesiastical and secular productions. He composed the original music of Metastasio's *Didone Abbandonata*, the opera which, when performed at Naples in 1724, laid the foundation of the poet's fame. No particulars of the life of this composer seem to be recorded.

Nicolo Porpora was born at Naples in 1689.

At an early age he was placed under the care of Alessandro Scarlatti, and is considered the most celebrated scholar of that great master. He devoted himself chiefly to dramatic music, and began his career at Venice, where, however, his merit was not at first appreciated. Before he was able to distinguish himself, he lived for a considerable time in that city, poor and unemployed. The Emperor Charles VI., who was a musical connoisseur, was not pleased with his music, which, he said, was too full of shakes and other vocal ornaments. Through the friendship of Hasse, the imperial *dilettante*, notwithstanding his prepossession, was prevailed upon to hear an oratorio of Porpora's composition. Porpera, having received a hint from his friend, did not introduce a single shake in the course of the oratorio. The emperor was quite surprised, and kept continually repeating, "Why, this is quite a different thing—there is not a single shake!" At last, however, the concluding fugue began, and the emperor observed that its theme set out with four trilled notes. These, of course, were taken up in succession, in the answers, by the different parts, and worked upon according to the rules of that species of composition. "When the emperor," says the author of the Life of Haydn, who tells the story with his usual liveliness, "who was privileged never to laugh, heard, in the full height of the fugue, this deluge of shakes which seemed like the music of a set of crazy paralytics, he could no

longer preserve his gravity, but laughed outright, perhaps for the first time in his life. In France, the land of jokes, this pleasantry might have given offence, but at Vienna it was the beginning of Porpora's fortune."

His first opera, *Ariana e Teseo*, performed at Vienna, in 1717, laid the foundation of his fame, and he produced several other works in that city with great success. At Venice he was less fortunate at first; the preference, as has been already mentioned, having been given to Vinci; but the Venetians soon learned to appreciate his talents; and his *Ariana* obtained the applause which it merited. He afterwards went to Dresden, where he was engaged as *maestro di capella* and singing master to the Princess Maria Antonietta. He had there to contend with another formidable rival, in the person of Hasse, whom if he did not conquer, he was at least not conquered by him; for his operas, though performed in competition with those of Hasse, were received with great applause by the court and the public. It was here that he introduced to the public his pupil, the young and beautiful Mingotti, whom he opposed with success to the hitherto unrivalled wife of Hasse, the celebrated Faustina.

In 1733, Porpora came to England, in consequence of an invitation from the nobility and gentry who had set on foot an opera in opposition to Handel. Musical faction at that time ran high in

England. The aristocratic subscribers to the opera had taken different sides in the quarrels which had arisen between Handel and his principal singers, Senesino and Cuzzoni; and were, moreover, offended at the advanced price for admission to the operas on oratorio nights. They therefore opened a subscription for a rival opera, engaging Porpora as composer and conductor, and a company of singers, containing Handel's mutinous troops, and strengthened by the addition of Farinelli. But Porpora, successful as he had been in his previous campaigns, was unable to withstand the "giant Handel." His *Ariana e Teseo*, indeed, was brought out, and sustained twenty representations during the season; and another opera by him, called *Ferdinando*, was performed three or four times. He conducted this establishment for three seasons; but most of the pieces performed were by other composers. His most successful production appears to have been *Polifemo*, which (as is said in the title-page) was composed by Porpora, "per la Nobilità Britannica," and performed during a considerable part of the season of 1735. "In examining," says Burney, "the favourite songs of this opera that were printed by Walsh, among which are five of Farinelli's, with one of Senesino's, and one of Montagnana's, there appears to be considerable merit in the melody. Indeed, so much of the new taste and new passages of this period seem to have been derived from Porpora's songs, that the difference of

style and fancy in the airs of Farinelli, from those that were sung by Nicolini two or three and twenty years before, is wonderful. Yet the songs of Nicolini, being the best of the time, were equally admired by the public, who reason from what they hear, and improve in criticism by excellence in composition and performance, so much as never to tolerate inferiority while memory enables them to form a comparison. The King, Queen, Prince of Wales, and Princesses, (Burney adds,) honoured the first representation of *Polifemo* with their presence, and there was the fullest house of the season."

Porpora, who exhibited no lack of courage in this warfare, ventured also to dispute the palm with Handel in the composition of an oratorio. But his *David*, brought out at the King's Theatre in 1735, was performed only three times, while Handel continued the performance of different oratorios, including *Deborah*, *Esther*, and *Athalia*, without operas, for nearly two months. Notwithstanding his undoubted merit, and the support of a powerful party, Porpora at length found himself unable to carry on the struggle, and left England in 1737. His operas continued to be occasionally performed in London. In 1743, in particular, Apostolo Zeno's *Temistocle*, with Porpora's music, was performed at the opera-house, and had a run of eight nights. "The air in this opera," says Burney, beginning, *Di che a sua voglia eleggere*, is in a grand and original style; the shakes, however, on the first note

of a phrase or passage, seem strange from so great a singing-master. *L'ire tue* has some new effects and embellishments, and was pillaged by Weideman* in his minuet. I never saw music in which shakes were so lavished: Porpora seems to have composed the air, *Contrasto assai*, in a shivering fit." This remark, by the way, reminds us of the anecdote of the composer and the Emperor Charles VI., the truth of which it confirms. Porpora seems to have retained his propensity towards shakes.

After Porpora's departure from England, he was for some time master of the Conservatorio of the *Incurabili* at Venice. In 1759, we find him residing at Vienna, in a state of indigence. At this time, Haydn, then an obscure young man, derived the benefit of his musical instructions. "Haydn," says the author of that composer's life, "did not learn recitative of Porpora: the inferiority of his recitatives to those of the inventor† of this kind of music is a sufficient proof of this: but he learned from him the true Italian style of singing, and the art of accompanying on the pianoforte, which is not so easy a thing as is commonly supposed. He succeeded in obtaining these lessons in the following

* A celebrated composer for and performer on the German flute, whose music was long very popular among the amateurs of that instrument.

† Not the *inventor*, but certainly one of the greatest improvers of recitative.

way. A noble Venetian, named Cornaro, at that time resided at Vienna, as ambassador from the Republic. He had a mistress passionately fond of music, who had harboured old Porpora in the hotel of the embassy. Haydn found means to get introduced into the family on account of his musical attainments; and his excellency carried him, along with his mistress and Porpora, to the baths of Manensdorff, which were at that time a place of fashionable resort. The young man, who cared for nobody but the old Neapolitan, employed all sorts of devices to get into his good graces, and to obtain his harmonic favours. Every day he rose early, brushed the old man's coat, cleaned his shoes, and combed out his old-fashioned periwig, though he was as sour as can well be imagined. Haydn obtained at first nothing but the courteous salutation of 'fool,' or 'blockhead,' when he entered his room in a morning. But the bear, finding that he was served gratuitously, and observing at the same time the rare qualities of his self-devoted servant, allowed himself to soften now and then, and gave him good advice. Haydn was favoured with it more especially, whenever he had to accompany the fair Wilhelmina in singing Porpora's airs, which were filled with basses by no means easy to understand. Joseph thus learned in this house to sing in the best Italian taste."

Porpora's situation, at this time, is affectingly described by Metastasio, in a letter written by him,

in March 1759, to his friend Farinelli, then at Madrid, and in high favour at the Spanish court. "I am unable," says the benevolent poet, "to resist the compassion which our poor friend Porpora excited in me yesterday, when he entreated me to second the letter, which I now enclose, with one from myself. It is sufficient to draw tears from every one possessed of humanity, to see a man of such merit in his profession reduced to absolute want of bread by the well-known misfortunes of Saxony, whence he derived a certain pension sufficient at least for his subsistence. He understands that your compassionate sovereigns, in their munificence and charity, are in the custom of granting small pensions, under the title of Eleemosynaries, to persons in distress; and he entreats me to recommend him to your intercession, that he might obtain one, which would just enable him to subsist; and this is not saying much." The death of Ferdinand VI., which took place soon after the date of this letter, and which deprived Farinelli of his influence at Madrid, prevented him from doing anything in behalf of the veteran composer.

Porpora spent his latter years at Naples, the place of his nativity, where he appears to have lived in great poverty. He died in 1767, at the age of eighty-two.

Rinaldo di Capua was a Neapolitan, born about the beginning of the last century. He was the natural son of a nobleman of high rank, and at first

studied music as an accomplishment; but being left by his father with only a small fortune, which he soon dissipated, he was forced to make it his profession. He composed his first opera for the theatre of Vienna at the age of seventeen, and his productions were in great favour over Europe for many years. The period of his success was from 1737, when he composed *Il Ciro Riconosciuto*, to 1758, when he produced *Adriano in Siria*, said to have been his last opera. Burney refers to a scene in the opera of *Vologeso* as a specimen of the perfection to which dramatic music was brought in Italy before the middle of the last century. He has been erroneously said to have been the inventor of accompanied recitatives; but he was among the first who introduced, into recitatives of a strongly impassioned character, long *ritornelli*, or instrumental symphonies, in order to express or imitate what it would be ridiculous to attempt by means of the voice. And so important an innovation gives him a claim to a place of distinction in musical history.

When Dr. Burney was at Rome in 1770, Rinaldo di Capua was living there, indigent and neglected. In the course of a long life he had experienced various changes of fortune. When he found old age approaching, he collected together his principal works, thinking that they would be a resource in time of need. That time came; various misfortunes befel him and his family; but when he wished to have recourse to the accumulated produce

of his pen, he found that a profligate son had sold his precious manuscripts for waste paper. The period of his death is not recorded.

The name of Giovanni Battista Pergolesi is one of the most illustrious in the history of music. He was born at Caforia, a little town in the neighbourhood of Naples, in the year 1704. Having discovered in his childhood a disposition for music, he was placed in the *Conservatorio dei poveri in Giesu Cristo*, a celebrated musical seminary at Naples, where he produced specimens of genius which would have done honour to the first masters of the time, at an age when others could scarcely have acquired the rudiments of the art. When only fourteen, he discovered that, according to the prevailing system of education, melody and expression were sacrificed to laborious counterpoint, and the art of solving harmonical problems; and, after making himself master of the principles of harmony and the rules of orchestral writing, he entreated his family to release him from the trammels of a school from which he felt that he could derive no further benefit. As soon as he quitted the conservatory, he commenced a course of study more suitable to the bent of his own genius. He sought the instructions of Vinci and Hasse, as being the purest and simplest melodists of the time, and soon not only equalled, but surpassed them in their own style. He attained their simplicity and clear-

ness, while he excelled them in the grace, variety, and expression of his melody.

For a time, however, his countrymen did not discover his merits; and his first opera was brought out at Naples with little success. He obtained the patronage of the Prince of Stigliano, who was able to appreciate his genius, and procured for him employment in composing for the *Teatro Nuovo*. The works by which he first distinguished himself were *intermezzi*, which were received by his countrymen with great favour, but being written in the Neapolitan dialect, their popularity was confined to that city. That this was the case is much to be regretted; for the only one of them that was written in generally intelligible Italian, *La Serva Padrona*, speedily became popular throughout Europe. Its introduction into France was almost sufficient, of itself, to effect a revolution in the national taste; and, though long laid aside in the theatres, it is to this day delightful to those who love the elegant gaiety and charming simplicity of the old Italian school.

This celebrated piece is called an "Intermezzo *a due voci*," and has only two characters, the third person introduced being merely a mute. In the first scene, Uberto, an old bachelor, appears in his morning deshabille, grumbling to himself at his spoiled servant-maid, who has chosen to let him call in vain for his chocolate. His soliloquy begins

in the form of a little *cavatina*, containing the Spanish proverb,

" Aspettare e non venire,
Star in letto e non dormire,
Ben servire e non gradire
Son trè cose per morire."

He goes on, in recitative, calling on " Serpina," and complaining of the damsel's arrogance and wilfulness. Her voice is heard behind the scenes, quarrelling with her fellow-servant: at last she appears, and, confident in the power of her charms, treats her master's testy impatience with the utmost nonchalance. At last, provoked beyond endurance, he declares he will go immediately and take a wife, to be rid of her impertinence. " Very well," says the maiden, " take me." — " You, indeed!" — " Yes, me!" —

" *Serpina.* Prenderate me.
Uberto. Te!
Serp. Certo.
Uber. Affè?
Serp. Affè.
Uber. Io non so chi mi tien,
Dammi, dammi un bastone;
Tanto ardir!
Serp. O, voi far e dir potete
Che nulla altra che me
Sposar dovrete.
Uber. Vattene, figlia mia.
Serp. Voleste dir, mia sposa.
Uber. Oh, stelle! oh, sorte!
Oh, questa è per me morte.

Serp. O morte o vita, così esser dee
L'ho fisso nel pensiero.
Uber. Oh, queste è un altro diavolo più nero."

This dialogue is carried on in a rapid recitative. Its conclusion is thrown into a light and airy duet ;—

" *Serpina.* Lo conosco a quell' occhietti
Furbi, ladri, malignetti,
Che se ben voi dite nò
Pur m'accenano di sì.
Uberto. Signorina, v'ingannate,
Troppo in alto voi volate,
Gl'occhi ed io vi dicon nò
Ed un sogno è questo sì.
Serp. Ma perche ? non son graziosa ?
Non son bella, e spiritosa
Sù, mirate, leggiadria
Veh, che brio, che maestà.
Uber. Ah, costei mi va tentando
Quanto val, che me la fà.
Serp. (*aparte.*) Eh, mi par che và calando.
Via signore !
Uber. Eh vanne via !
Serp. Risolvete.
Uber. Eh, matta sei.
Serp. Son per voi gli affetti mici
E dovete sposar me.
Uber. Oh, che imbroglio egli è per me !"

This is a perfect specimen of a comic duet. Though the parts are beautifully blended together, yet the colloquy is sustained with the utmost spirit, and the musical phrases, though graceful and elegant, add to the point and humour of the dialogue. One passage is worthy of notice, as show-

ing the good effect of vocal imitation suggested by a word, where the subject is humorous. When Uberto tells his maid, "Troppo in alto voi volate," —"You are flying too high, my dear?—" he makes a *flight* upon the word "volate," expressive of sarcastic mimicry. But such imitations, though often employed, always have a bad effect in serious music.

In the second act Serpina appears, accompanied by Vespone, her fellow-servant, disguised in a soldier's uniform. While she is instructing him how he is to play his part, her master enters, dressed to go out. She tells Vespone to wait without, and be ready when he is wanted. The old gentleman accosts her as he is going out. She asks him if he is still resolved to marry. "Yes," he says, "but not you." "Well," says Serpina, "since it must be so, I have determined to marry too, and what is more, I have found a husband."—"Indeed! and who may he be?" "O, he is a soldier—Captain Tempest."—

"*Uberto.* Oh brutto nome!
Serpina. E al nome sono i fatti corrispondenti
Egli è poco flematico.
Uber. Male!
Serp. Anzi lunatico.
Uber. Peggio!
Serp. Và presto in collera.
Uber. Pessimo!
Serp. E quando poi è incollerito
Fà ruine scompiglic—
Uh, via, via——

Uber. L'anderà mal, la vostra signoria.
Serp. Perchè?
Uber. Se è così schiribizzosa meco, ed è serva,
Or pensa con lui essendo sposa
Senza dubbio il Capitan Tempesta in collera andrà
E lei di bastonate una tempesta avrà.
Serp. A questo poi Serpina penserà.
Uber. Me ne dispiacerebbe,
Alfin del bene io ti voglio,
E tu il sai.
Serp. Tanto obbligata:
Intanto intenda a conservarsi,
Goda colla sua sposa amata,
E di Serpina non si scordi affatto.
Uber. Ah, tel perdoni il ciel;
L'esser tu troppo boriosa
Venir me fè a tal atto."

Serpina, seeing her master beginning to be moved, addresses him in a little tender air, turning aside every now and then to observe how he is affected.

" (*Lento.*) A Serpina penserete
Qualche volta in qualche dì
E direte, ah, poverina!
Cara un tempo ella mi fù.
(*Allegro.*) Eh mi par che già pian piano
S'incomincia a intenerir.
(*Lento.*) S'io poi fui impertinente,
Mi perdoni—malamente mi guidai;
Lo vedo, lo vedo, sì.
(*Allegro.*) Ei mi stringe per la mano,
Meglio il fatto non può gir."

The contrast between the soft bewitching accents which she addresses to him, and the lively little pas-

sage which she sings, *sotto voce*, to herself, is full of comedy.

Serpina asks her master if he would choose to see her intended, and goes to fetch him. Meanwhile Uberto expresses his irresolution and agitation—the conflict in his mind between love and prudence—in a *scena* consisting of an accompanied recitative and an air. This soliloquy is admirable

(*Recit.*) " Ah poveretta lei ! per altro io penserei,
Ma ella è serva——ma il primo non saresti ——
Dunque—la sposeresti ? Basta ! eh no, non sia ! ——
Sù ! pensieri ribaldi, andate via !
Piano !——io me l'ho allevata ;
Sò poi com' ella è nata :*
Eh, che sei matto ; piano, di grazia ;
Eh non pensarei affatto
Ma io ch'ho compassione,
E pur—quella meschina, e torna !
Oh Dio !—e siam da capo——
Oh che confusione !
(*Aria.*) Son imbrogliato io già.
Ho un certo che nel core
Che dir per me non sà,

* This was one of Bailie Jarvie's considerations, when he made up his mind to promote his maid Mattie from her wheel by the kitchen fire to the upper end of his table, in the character of Mrs. Jarvie, " My honest father the deacon," said the worthy Bailie, " had a by-word,

' Brent brow and lily skin,
A loving heart and leal within,
Is better than gowd or gentle kin.'

Besides," as he always concluded, " Mattie was nae ordinary lassock-quean ; she was akin to the Laird of Limmerfield."

Non so s'è amore
O s'è pieta;
Sento un che poi mi dice
Uberto, pensa a te.
Io sto fra il sì e il nò,
Fra il voglio e fra il non voglio.
E sempre più m'imbroglio;
Ah misero, infelice!
Che mai sara di me?"

Serpina enters with the pretended soldier, and introduces him as her bridegroom. He keeps aloof, and says nothing; Serpina keeping between them.

"Why," says the old gentleman, "this Captain Tempest of yours has got a stormy countenance, to be sure; but has he got nothing to say for himself?"

"Oh yes, sir; he says he wishes you to give me my portion."

"Your portion, girl; are you crazy?"

"Gently, sir, you'll put him in a fury."

"In a fury—he may be as furious as Orlando; what is that to me?"

"O, sir, only see what a rage he is getting into! He only wants four thousand crowns."

"Four thousand devils!"

"Well, but, sir, he says——"

"What does he say? He speaks through an interpreter, I think."

"He says that you must give me the four thousand crowns, or he won't marry me."

"He says so?"

"Yes, sir, he says so."

"Well, what is it to me whether he marries you or not?"

"Ah, but he says, if you won't pay my dowry, you must marry me yourself."

The old gentleman flies out at this impertinent proposition; but his own heart inclines him to comply; and at last he gives the damsel his hand in the presence of the witness. Serpina now discloses the trick; but he has made up his mind, and takes the matter good-humouredly. He is delighted at finding himself, as he thinks, obliged to gratify his own wishes; and the piece concludes with the following duet;—

"*Serpina.* Contento tu sarai
S'avrai amor per me.
Uberto. Contento è il core
E amore avrò per te.
Serp. Dì pur la verità.
Uber. Questa è la verità.
Serp. Oh Dio, mi par che nò.
Uber. Non dubitar, oibò.
Serp. O sposo grazioso!
Uber. Diletta mia sposetta!
(*A due.*) Così mi fai goder.
Serp. Se comandar vorrò,
Disgusto non avrai;
Or serva più non son.
Uber. Disgusto non avrò
Se comandar vorrai;
Ma con discrezion.
Serp. Quanto sei caro,— —
Uber. Quanto sei cara,——
(*A due*). Quanto è per me piacer."

The instrumental score of this piece consists merely of two violins, tenor, and bass, without any wind instruments. The two violin parts are frequently in unison, and the tenor often doubles the bass. The accompaniments, however, are spirited, ingenious, and so effective that every note tells; and the harmony, thin as it is, is beautifully transparent. The voices are perfectly well supported, without being overpowered or placed under restraint; and the effect would be delightful to ears not spoiled by the excessive richness of the modern orchestra. We are inclined, indeed, to think, that, even as it is, were the *Serva Padrona* revived, and performed with the archness, grace, and humour which could be imparted to it by Grisi and Lablache, it would be as attractive now as it was a hundred years ago.

We have met with another of Pergolesi's Intermezzi, called *Tracollo*, also for a male and female performer; but it is written in a dialect intelligible only to a Neapolitan. It seems, however, to be very lively and amusing; and the music is in a similar style to that of the *Serva Padrona*. In one movement only there are parts for two oboes and two horns; the rest of the score being merely for the quartet of stringed instruments.

These intermezzi were composed from the year 1730 to 1734. In 1735, on the strength of his reputation, he was engaged to compose an opera for the Tordinona theatre at Rome. Animated by

the hope of distinguishing himself by the production of a classical work, he chose the *Olimpiade* of Metastasio, and set to work with the ardour of hope and the enthusiasm inspired by so beautiful a subject. But his hopes were cruelly, indeed fatally disappointed. The Roman audience, under the influence of some strange caprice, received his opera with the utmost coldness, while they lavished their applause upon a very inferior work, called, *Nerone*, by Duni, a young composer who afterwards acquired considerable reputation in France.

Duni, who was a man of a candid and liberal spirit, was ashamed and mortified at having gained a triumph at the expense of a man whom he knew to be far superior to himself. But he had foreseen Pergolesi's failure and his own success. Having been invited to Rome to compose the second opera of the season, (Pergolesi being to compose the first,) he felt so strongly the superiority of Pergolesi, that he had not courage to write a note till he had heard a rehearsal of the *Olimpiade*. He then saw that Pergolesi had not hit the prevailing taste of the time, and frankly told him that his own opera would not be so good as the *Olimpiade*, but would succeed better. When he witnessed the cold reception given to Pergolesi, he declared, with honest indignation, that he was "frenetico contro il publico Romano;" and, during the few days that the *Olimpiade* languished upon the stage, he united himself to the small body of enlightened artists and *dilet-*

tanti, who were charmed with the work, in their endeavours to support it. But their efforts were vain, and Pergolesi's opera was thrown aside.

He immediately returned to Naples, mortified, and, as the event showed, broken-hearted. From that time he wrote no more for the stage, and probably would never have resumed the pen, had not the Duke of Matalon, a Neapolitan nobleman, prevailed upon him to compose a Mass and Vespers for a religious festival which was about to take place at Rome. He accordingly composed the mass, *Dixit Dominus*, and *Laudate*, which are to this day reckoned among the finest specimens of ecclesiastical music. They were performed in the church of *San Lorenzo* at Rome, and listened to with rapture. The young composer was now extolled to the skies: but the Roman public had inflicted an injury which they were unable to remedy. Their applauses came too late to counteract the effects of their cruel and unmerited coldness and neglect. His wounded spirit had preyed upon a frame naturally delicate, and he fell into a rapid consumption. His friend and patron, the Prince Stigliano, advised him to retire to a small house at Torre del Greco, a situation supposed to be beneficial in cases of pulmonary complaints. But his disease was past cure; and, after remaining a short time in this secluded retreat, he expired at the age of thirty-three.

During his last sickness he composed his cantata of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, his *Stabat Mater*, and his *Salva Regina*, which was the last of his works.

The *Stabat Mater*, a divine emanation of genius and feeling, is still the delight of every lover of the pure and beautiful ecclesiastical music of the old Italian masters. His dramatic works consist of a single opera, the *Olimpiade*, and the *intermezzi* which have been already mentioned.

No sooner was it known that Pergolesi was dead, than all Italy joined in doing honour to his memory. The *Olimpiade* was revived at Rome, and performed with the utmost splendour; and the same people, who, a short time before, had received it with indifference and neglect, now flocked in crowds to hear it, and applauded it with enthusiasm: a memorable instance of the fickleness and caprice of popular taste.

A story was at one time current that Pergolesi's death was caused by poison; but Dr. Burney, from all the information he could acquire both at Rome and Naples, is of opinion that it is without foundation. There can be no doubt that Pergolesi laboured under consumption for a considerable time before his death; and besides, the success of his works was not such as to make him an object of jealousy or envy.

The *Olimpiade* was first performed in England in 1742, when the character of *Megacle* was acted by the celebrated Monticelli. "The whole exquisite scene," says Burney, "where 'Se cerca, se dice' occurs, was rendered so interesting by the manner in which it was acted as well as sung by

Monticelli, that I have been assured by attentive hearers and good judges, that the union of poetry and music, expression and gesture, seldom have had a more powerful effect on an English audience." The first air in Monticelli's part, "Tremendi oscure atroci," (the words of which are not by Metastasio,) was sung at concerts by Frasi for ten years at least after the run of the opera was over.

Pergolesi's music is remarkable for the exquisite grace and beauty of its melody, and its true and natural expression. The *Olimpiade* is as tender and affecting as the *Serva Padrona* is gay and comic. An absence of labour and effort seems to characterise all his productions, even those for the church. But this facility was more apparent than real; for we are informed that he composed slowly and carefully. Ease in writing is the result of consummate art: and Pergolesi might have said with Carissimi, who, like him, was celebrated for the grace and ease of his melodies, "Ah, questo facile, quanto è difficile!" This ease and simplicity of Pergolesi's style, however, produced effects for which he certainly was not responsible. He was followed by imitators, who, by copying the thinness, and seemingly inartificial structure of his scores, without possessing the genius which could give to a few simple notes an effect beyond what could be produced by the most elaborate contrivance, rendered the music of the opera trifling and insipid.

Adolfo Hasse is generally mentioned by Italian

writers under the name of *Il Sassone*. Though a German, he belongs entirely to the Italian school; and Count Algarotti calls his music "d'Italia l'armonia divina." He was born at Bergedorf, near Hamburg, in 1699. He learned the rudiments of music at Hamburg, and became a tenor singer at the opera of that city. The celebrated Keiser was then composer for that theatre, and Hasse took his works as the models on which he formed his own style. He afterwards obtained the situation of singer to the court and theatre of Brunswick, where he brought out his first opera, *Antigono*, when he was only eighteen years of age. He now determined to enter upon the study of his art in one of the great schools of Italy; and in 1724 went to Naples, where he at first received instructions from Porpora. He earnestly desired to profit by the lessons of Alessandro Scarlatti, but was prevented from applying for them by the want of means of remuneration. Fortunately, however, he met Scarlatti in society, and made such an impression on the venerable master by his talents, modesty, and respectful behaviour towards himself, that he gave him lessons gratuitously, and treated him with the affection of a parent.

Soon afterwards he obtained the notice of a great Neapolitan banker, who employed him to compose a serenata for two voices. It was performed by Farinelli and Tesi, the greatest singers of the time; and Hasse gained so much reputation by it, that he

was engaged to compose a piece for the great opera-house. This was *Sesostrate*, performed in 1726 : and it so completely established his fame, that all the great theatres of Italy disputed the advantage of having him at the head of their orchestras. In 1727 he went to Venice, where he was appointed chapel-master to one of the conservatories ; and his success in this city was increased by the interest of the celebrated Faustina, whom he afterwards married. He remained at Venice till 1730, when he was offered the situations of chapel-master and composer to the king of Poland and elector of Saxony, with a salary of twelve thousand dollars for himself and Faustina, who was now his wife.

He remained many years in the service of the court of Dresden. The king of Poland gave him unlimited power and ample resources, of which he availed himself to place the Dresden opera on the most complete and splendid footing. He new-modelled the orchestra, the admirable disposition of which is minutely described by Rousseau, in his *Dictionnaire de Musique*.

He resided at Dresden till the year 1763, when the reverses experienced by the king of Poland compelled him to dismiss many persons from his employment, among whom were Hasse and his wife, who were obliged to retire upon a small pension. He had previously suffered severely by the bombardment of Berlin by the Prussians in 1760. Among other property, all his manuscripts were

destroyed; a heavy loss, as he was about to publish a complete collection of his works, the expense of which the king had undertaken to defray. He then resided at Vienna till about the year 1775, when he retired to Venice, the birth-place of his wife. There they both ended their days in the year 1783; Faustina, at the age of ninety, and her husband soon afterwards at the age of eighty-four.

Dr. Burney, in his musical tour through Germany, visited Hasse and Faustina (of whose musical career we shall afterwards have occasion to speak) at Vienna in 1773, and gives some interesting particulars respecting them.

"The Abate Taruffi," says Burney, "carried me to Signor Adolfo Hasse, who lives in a handsome house in the suburbs, called the Landstrass. Signora Faustina was at the window, and, seeing us stop at the door, came to meet us: I was presented to her by my conductor. She is a short, brown, sensible, and lively old woman; said she was much pleased to see a *cavaliere Inglese*, as she had formerly been honoured with great marks of favour in England. Signor Hasse soon entered the room. He is tall and rather large in size, but it is easy to imagine that in his younger days he must have been a robust and fine figure; great gentleness and goodness appear in his countenance and manners. He seems to have been more ill-treated by time than Faustina, though he is younger than her by ten years."

"On paying him a second visit," Burney says, "we found all the family at home, and our visit was truly cheerful and social. Signora Faustina is very conversable, and is still possessed of much curiosity concerning what is transacting in the world. She has likewise good remains, for seventy-two, of that beauty for which she was so much celebrated in her youth, but none of her fine voice. I asked her to sing—'*Ah, non posso!—ho perduto tutte le mie facoltà.*'—'Alas! I am no longer able,' said she, 'I have lost all my faculties.'

"I was extremely captivated with the conversation of Signor Hasse. He was easy, communicative, and rational; equally free from pedantry, pride, and prejudice. He spoke ill of no one; but, on the contrary, did justice to the talents of several composers that were occasionally named, even to those of Porpora, who, though his first master, was ever after his greatest rival. He thinks with Metastasio, that the good school of singing is lost; and says, that since the time of Pistocco, Bernacchi, and Porpora, no great scholars have been made.

"I asked him for a list of his works; and he told me that he had set all the operas of Metastasio, except *Temistocle;* some of them three or four times over, and almost all of them twice: besides these, he had set many operas written by Apostolo Zeno; for, in his youth, Metastasio did not write fast enough for him. To these compositions for the theatre must be added fourteen or fifteen oratorios,

with masses, misereres, stabat maters, and salve reginas, for the church. Besides all which, he added, that his cantatas, serenatas, intermezzos, and duets, for voices—his trios, quartets, and concertos, for instruments—were so numerous, that he should not know many of them again, if he were either to see or hear them. He modestly compared himself to animals of the greatest fecundity, whose progeny were either destroyed during infancy, or abandoned to chance; and added, that he, like other bad fathers, had more pleasure in producing than in preserving his offspring. However, this censure must be confined to the offspring of his brain, for he has taken great care of the education of his daughters.

"During this visit, these two young ladies were so obliging as to sing to me a *salve regina*, lately set by their father, in *duo*. It is an exquisite composition, full of grace, taste, and propriety. One of them has a sweet soprano *voce di camera*, of which the tone is delicate and interesting; the other has a rich and powerful contralto voice, fit for any church or theatre in Europe: both have good shakes, and such an expression, taste, and steadiness as it is natural to expect in the daughters and scholars of Signor Hasse and Signora Faustina.

"Signor Hasse is so much afflicted with the gout, that his fingers are stiff and distorted with it; and yet there are remains of a great player in his manner of touching the harpsichord, and of accompany-

ing; nor is it for want of knowing learned, extraneous, and equivocal modulation, that he is so sparing of it in his works. He played to me an extempore *toccata* or *capriccio*, in which he introduced some that were truly wonderful: but he has too sound a judgment to lavish on common and trifling occasions what should be reserved for extraordinary purposes. His modulation is in general simple, his melody natural, his accompaniments free from confusion; and leaving to fops and pedants all that frights, astonishes, and perplexes, he lets no other arts be discoverable in his compositions than those of pleasing the ear, and of satisfying the understanding."

Domenico Scarlatti, though his fame now rests chiefly on his compositions for the harpsichord, was one of the great reformers of Italian dramatic music. He was born in 1683, and was the pupil of the celebrated Alessandro Scarlatti, his father. He became first known by his compositions about the year 1709, when he produced some successful operas at Venice. At this time he became acquainted with Handel, who, though not older than himself, had already established his reputation. To this great man he became much attached, and, it is said, profited largely by his conversation and counsels. He had a long and brilliant career, both as a dramatic writer, and as a composer for, and performer on, the harpsichord. He was, at one period of his life, master of the royal chapel at Madrid,

and teacher of the harpsichord to the queen of Spain, to whom his admirable lessons for that instrument are dedicated.*

We are unacquainted with Domenico Scarlatti's dramatic compositions; but they are described by musical writers as being of great merit. Dr. Burney speaks of an opera called *Alessandro in Persia*, performed at London in 1741, and made up of pieces by different authors. "The air, Sparge al mare," he says, "composed by Domenico Scarlatti, is one of the finest songs of the kind that I know. The rolling of the billows and distraction of the crew, during a storm and shipwreck, are admirably painted by the orchestra, and the voice part is full of fine passages for a great singer." There are other instances of his songs thus introduced, but it does not appear that any entire opera of his was ever performed in England.

Francesco Feo was born about the year 1699. He founded a vocal school at Naples, which became celebrated throughout Europe. After having produced a number of great compositions for the church, he turned his attention to the theatre, and composed several operas, of which *Ariana* and *Arsace* are described as the most prominent. It has

* The taste for these beautiful compositions has been revived by the exquisite manner in which they are performed in public by Moscheles. There is a growing disposition to return to the works of the old masters, which, it is to be hoped, will become more and more prevalent.

been remarked that Gluck has borrowed from the latter his overture to *Iphigenia*. In the latter years of his life he devoted himself to instruction, and completed the musical education of Jomelli.

Baldassare Galuppi, one of the greatest musicians of the last century, was born in 1701, in the little island of Burano near Venice, whence he received the name of Buranello. He was a pupil of Lotti. His two first operas, *La Fede nell' Inconstanza* and *Gli Amici Rivali*, were produced in 1722. He soon acquired great celebrity, and composed an immense number of operas for the principal cities of Italy. His style, however, was not approved by Metastasio, who, in 1749, when Galuppi was almost fifty, thus speaks of him in a letter to Farinelli : " I wish you joy of the music of Buranello, who, according to what I have heard, will be a good composer for violins, violoncellos, and singers, but a very bad workman for poets. He thinks as much about the words, when setting them, as you do about being elected pope ; and if he did think of them, I am not sure that he would do better. He abounds in ideas, though they are not always his own, nor well linked together. In short, he is not to my taste. I speak with sincerity to you, my dear friend ; but in public I leave him in that state of credit in which he is held by those who judge with the ear, and not with the understanding."

In 1741, after Handel had ruined himself by carrying on operas in opposition to the nobility, and

had abandoned the attempt, the management of the opera was undertaken by the Earl of Middlesex, who engaged Galuppi as a composer. The first specimen he gave of his abilities in that capacity was the opera of *Penelope*, written for our stage by Rolli. It was coldly received, and performed only five times. The English public, accustomed to the learned and solid style of Handel, did not relish a piece written in the light and flimsy style which had become prevalent in Italy. In the following year he produced *Scipione in Cartagine*, which was performed nine times. In 1743 his *Enrico* was brought out with success, and in a style of great excellence; the principal characters being performed by Monticelli, Visconti, and Amorevoli, and the inferior parts by two female singers, Frasi and Galli, who possessed considerable reputation. Some of the airs in this opera, especially "Son troppe vezzose," became very popular; and Galuppi's style produced an influence on our own dramatic music. Towards the end of the same season he produced *Sirbace*, which was performed eight times.

He then returned to Italy; but some of his most celebrated operas were afterwards performed in London at different periods, and always with success. His *Ricimero* was performed in 1755. His comic opera *Il Mondo della Luna*, was performed in 1760, and delighted the public, not only by the lightness and gaiety of the music, but by the admi-

rable acting and singing of Signora Paganini. In the following year a still greater effect was produced by his *Filosofo di Campagna.* "This burletta," says Burney, "surpassed in musical merit all the comic operas that were performed in England till the *Buona Figliuola;* and its success was proportioned to its merit. Though Signor Paganini was but a coarse first man, his wife, Eberardi, and Sarbelloni, performed their parts very much to the satisfaction of the public. The simple and elegant air, "La bella che adoro," sung by Sarbelloni, from the mere tone of his voice, was always applauded: Eberardi's innocent manner of singing "La Pastorella al prato" interested every hearer; and the lively and playful air, "Donne, donne, siamo nate," was sung in a way so piquant and agreeable, that the applause Signora Paganini acquired by it amounted almost to acclamation. Other parts of the music were sufficiently good to support bad singing; for the bass song, "Ho per lei in mezzo al core," was always heard with pleasure, though sung by Paganini almost without a voice.

"This opera had an uninterrupted run of fifteen nights. Indeed the airs of every kind in *Il Filosofo di Campagna* were in such favour, that Paganini was generally encored in whatever she sung. This performer, though not young when she came hither from Berlin, increased in reputation so much during the run of this opera, that when it was her turn to

have a benefit, such a crowd assembled as I never remember to have seen on the like occasion, before or since; indeed not one-third of the company that presented themselves at the opera-house doors were able to obtain admission. Caps were lost, and gowns torn in pieces, without number or mercy, in the struggle to get in: ladies in full dress, who had sent away their servants and carriages, were obliged to appear in the streets and walk home in great numbers without caps or attendants. Luckily the weather was fine, and did not add to their distress by rain or wind; though their confusion was greatly augmented by its being broad daylight, and the streets full of spectators, who could neither refrain from looking or laughing at such splendid and uncommon *street-walkers.*"

The popularity of Galuppi's compositions in England had a perceptible influence on our own dramatic music. His airs were introduced into the English operas of the day; and English composers imitated the Italian melody in their own productions; a practice which, though it contributed to polish and refine their style, yet, as generally happens in the case of imitations, was carried to an extravagant excess, and English songs frequently became caricatures of Italian bravuras.

Galuppi was for many years maestro di capella of the church of St. Mark, and president of the conservatory of the *Incurabili* at Venice. In 1766

he went to Petersburgh, where he was received with great distinction ; and had just returned from thence when Dr. Burney saw him at Venice in 1770, " at which time, though near seventy years of age, he was as full of genius and fire as ever."—" It seems," says Burney, " as if the genius of Signor Galuppi, like that of Titian, became more animated by age. He cannot now be less than seventy years old, and yet it is generally allowed here that his last operas, and his last compositions for the church, abound with more spirit, taste, and fancy, than those of any other period of his life. His character and conversation are natural, intelligent, and agreeable. He is in figure little and thin, but has very much the look of a gentleman. His family has been very large, but all his children, except three or four, are now well married. He has the appearance of a regular family man, and is esteemed at Venice as much for his private character as for his talents." Burney records Galuppi's definition of "good music," which he thinks admirable, and, though short, very comprehensive. " Good music," said Galuppi, " consists of *vaghezza, chiarezza, e buona modulazione ;*"—beauty, clearness, and good modulation. He might just as well have said that good music consists of goodness.

Galuppi died at Venice in 1785, at the age of eighty-four. During his own life, very different estimates were formed of his merit at different

times. We have seen that the mild Metastasio spoke harshly of him when he had come to the mature age of almost fifty; and his first opera written for the English stage was coldly received. Notwithstanding this, however, few musicians have gained a more brilliant reputation than that which he afterwards acquired. The truth seems to be, that his genius ripened slowly. Dramatic composition, in Italy, had undergone a revolution. It had passed from one extreme to another. Leo, Vinci, and, above all, Pergolesi, had substituted expressive simplicity for laboured complication; but their imitators had carried this simplicity the length of baldness and insipidity. In the language applied to Galuppi by Metastasio, composers became good for singers, but bad for poets. Dramatic expression ceased to be their study, their only object being to gratify the ear of the most careless listener by agreeable airs, and to give the favourite singers the opportunity of displaying their voice and execution. Into this style Galuppi at first fell; but he afterwards emerged from it, and was one of the few great men who supported the Italian school when an inundation of shallow and frivolous productions threatened it with utter decay.

Terradellas, a Spaniard, holds a high rank among the dramatic composers of his time. He was born at Barcelona in 1701, and is said to have died at Rome in 1751, in consequence of the failure of

one of his operas. He was in England in 1746, and composed two operas, *Mitridate* and *Bellerofonte*, which were performed with success. The latter, which was published by Walsh, justifies, on examination, its reputation. The airs for Signora Frasi and Signor Reginelli (a contralto) are in a broad and expressive style, and contain bold and effective modulations, and uncommon chromatic passages. There is more firmness and vigour, too, in his accompaniments than in those of most of his contemporaries.

David Perez, a composer of great celebrity, was born, of Spanish parents, at Naples in 1711, and educated in the conservatorio of *Santa Maria di Loretto* in that city. He composed his first operas for the theatre of Palermo from 1741 to 1748, and often gained great reputation by his productions at Naples and Rome. In 1752 he went to Portugal, where he spent the remainder of his life in the service of king Joseph. He died at Lisbon in 1778. Like Handel he was corpulent and fond of the table, a propensity which is supposed to have shortened his days. He was much admired, respected, and beloved, and his memory was cherished in Portugal many years after his death. Like Handel, too, he was blind during the latter years of his life; and while labouring under this calamity, and confined to bed, frequently dictated compositions in parts without the help of an instrument. He sang with

great taste, particularly in the tender and pathetic style.

His opera of *Alessandro nell' Indie*, which was composed in 1755, for the opening of the new theatre of Lisbon on the queen's birth-day, was performed with extraordinary splendour. A troop of horse appeared on the stage, with a Macedonian phalanx. One of the king's riding-masters rode Bucephalus to a march which Perez had composed expressly for the paces of a noble charger; and on this occasion there were assembled the following great singers; Elisi, Manzoli, Caffarelli, Gizziello, Veroli, Babbli, Luciani, Raaf, Raina, and Guadagni—a constellation of unequalled brilliancy.

Several of Perez's operas were performed in England; particularly *Ezio*, in 1755, and *Didone Abbandonata* in 1761. Among his works is Metastasio's *Artaserse*, in which the air, "L'onda dal mar divisa" (the original of the English words "Water parted from the sea") is curious, as we find that it contains the long divisions in triplets which Arne has introduced into his famous bravura, "The Soldier tir'd." "There is," says Burney, "an original spirit and elegance in all his productions; in which if any defect appears, it is the want of symmetry in the phraseology of his melodies, in which there may sometimes be found what the French call *phrases manquées* and *contretems*, to which critical ears in modern times are much more accustomed

than formerly." This defect may exist, but we confess our inability to discover it in the few compositions of this master which we have been able to examine. Extreme smoothness and regularity of rhythm characterised the Italian music of that day; and any deficiency in this respect was, of all defects, the least likely to be tolerated.

Nicolo Logroscino, a Neapolitan, born about the end of the seventeenth century, was a composer of comic operas. As they were written in the Neapolitan dialect, they were little known beyond that state, and are now entirely forgotten; but he deserves honourable mention as inventor of the *finale*, or that species of concerted music, terminating each act of an opera, in which a portion of the business of the piece is carried on. The extent to which this species of dramatic music is now carried is one of the principal features which distinguish the opera of the present day, and has mainly contributed to throw the works of the older masters out of use.

The composers of whom some account has been given in this chapter, were the principal stars of the most numerous and brilliant constellation that ever has appeared in the musical hemisphere. They may be called a constellation, because, though they rose, reached their zenith, and set at different times, yet there was a period when the whole of them were together above the horizon. Differing,

too, as they did, in individual genius, they all belonged to one great school, possessed of common qualities and characteristics.

The same period was illumined by an equally numerous, splendid, and unequalled constellation of great singers, several of whom have already been incidentally mentioned, but many of them demand more ample and regular notice.

CHAPTER XVII.

Great Italian singers during the above period—Tesi—Faustina—Cuzzoni—Farinelli—Senesino.

Vittoria Tesi was born at Florence about the year 1690. She was a pupil of the celebrated school of Bernacchi at Bologna. In 1719 she was at the opera of Dresden, where she used to sing, *all'ottava*, airs for bass voices; but the compass of her voice was so extraordinary, that no difficulty in regard to pitch ever gave her any trouble. She was not remarkable for her performance of rapid passages; but she had a grand and majestic style, and great powers of declamation. Though not beautiful, she captivated every body by the graces of her deportment and action. She spent the latter part of her life at Vienna, having for many years retired from the stage. She died about the year 1775. Burney gives the following particulars respecting her, which he learned at Vienna in 1770. "The great singer, Signora Tesi, who was a celebrated performer upwards of fifty years ago, lives here; she is now more than eighty, but has long

quitted the stage. She has been very sprightly in her day, and yet is at present in high favour with the empress-queen. Her story is somewhat singular. She was connected with a certain count, a man of great quality and distinction, whose fondness increased by possession to such a degree as to determine him to marry her; a much more uncommon resolution in a person of high birth on the continent than in England. She tried to dissuade him, enumerating all the bad consequences of such an alliance; but he would listen to no reasoning, nor take any denial. Finding all remonstrances vain, she left him one morning, went to a neighbouring street, and addressing herself to a poor labouring man, a journeyman baker, said she would give him fifty ducats if he would marry her, not with a view to their cohabiting together, but to serve a present purpose. The poor man readily consented to become her nominal husband. Accordingly they were formally married; and when the count renewed his solicitations, she told him it was now utterly impossible to grant his request, for she was already the wife of another,—a sacrifice she had made to his fame and family."

Faustina Bordoni, the wife of Hasse, was born in 1693. She first appeared as a theatrical singer at Venice in 1716. In 1725 she was at Vienna, where she received great honours and rewards. Apostolo Zeno, in one of his letters, describes her brilliant success, and adds, "But whatever good

fortune or encouragement she meets with, she deserves it all by her courteous and agreeable manners, as well as by her talents, with which she has enchanted and gained the esteem and affection of the whole court." He afterwards speaks of the regret expressed at Vienna, on her quitting that city to go to London. She arrived here in 1725, when Cuzzoni was in the height of her favour; and the rivalry of these sirens produced violent feuds among the patrons of the opera. After remaining in England for two seasons, she returned to Italy, and, in 1732, was married to Hasse.*

Faustina is described as having been remarkable for her personal charms and her talents as an actress, as well as for her vocal powers. She was of small stature, but had a form of perfect symmetry, and a beautiful countenance, full of fire and intelligence. Quantz, the celebrated instructor of Frederic the Second, who was in London, in 1727, at the same time with her, gave Dr. Burney a striking account of her qualities as a performer "Faustina," he says, "had a mezzo-soprano voice, that was less clear than penetrating. Her compass now was only from B flat to G in alt; but after this time she extended its limits downwards. She possessed what the Italians call *un cantar granito;* her execution was articulate and brilliant. She had a fluent tongue for pronouncing words rapidly and distinctly, and a flexible throat for divisions, with so beautiful

* See *antè*, page 390.

and quick a shake that she could put it in motion upon short notice, just when she would. The passages might be smooth, or by leaps, or consist of iterations of the same note; their execution was equally easy to her as to any instrument whatever. She was doubtless the first who introduced with success a swift repetition of the same note. She sang adagios with great passion and expression, but was not equally successful if such deep sorrow were to be impressed on the hearer as might require dragging, sliding, or notes of syncopation, and *tempo rubato*. She had a very happy memory in arbitrary changes and embellishments, and a clear and quick judgment in giving to words their full power and expression. In her action she was very happy; and as she perfectly possessed that flexibility of muscles and features which constitutes face-playing, she succeeded equally well in furious, amorous, and tender parts: in short, she was born for singing and acting."

Francesca Cuzzoni was a native of Parma. Her first public appearance on the stage seems to have been with her rival Faustina, in 1719, at Venice. After having sung in most of the great theatres of Italy, she arrived in England in 1723, where she continued in undiminished favour till 1729, when she returned to Italy.

While Cuzzoni and Faustina were in England together, the spirit of rivalry between themselves, and of party among their patrons, was carried to

an extravagant pitch. It is told by Horace Walpole, that his mother, Lady Walpole, had them at her house to sing in a concert at which an assemblage of the first people in the kingdom were present. She was under the greatest difficulty how to settle the precedence, or prevail on either to relinquish the *pas*. The knot could not be untied, but it was cut by the following expedient. Finding it impossible to prevail on the one to sing while the other was present,. she took Faustina to a remote part of the house under the pretext of showing her some curious china, during which time the company obtained a song from Cuzzoni, who supposed that her rival had quitted the field. A similar device was practised in order to get Cuzzoni out of the room while Faustina performed.

In a short time each of the rivals found partisans among the ladies of quality, and violent animosities broke out among them. The party on each side became numerous and formidable, and the fashionable world was convulsed by their feuds. At first the heroines themselves behaved civilly to each other. Sir Robert Walpole having taken the part of Faustina, his lady, in order that Cuzzoni might not be borne down by his influence, countenanced her; and when Sir Robert was from home used to invite them both to dinner. She was at first puzzled how to adjust the precedence between them at her table; but they behaved politely, and relieved their hostess by mutual concessions. But this did

not last ; their mutual jealousy and hatred rose to such a height, that on one occasion, when they happened to meet in public, they actually came to blows in the presence of the company.

The Cuzzoni party was headed by the Countess of Pembroke, whose followers used to hoot whenever Faustina appeared. The *London Journal* of June 10th, 1727, says, " A great disturbance happened at the opera, occasioned by the partisans of the two celebrated rival ladies, Cuzzoni and Faustina. The contention at first was only carried on by hissing on one side and clapping on the other ; but proceeded at length to the melodious use of catcals and other accompaniments, which manifested the zeal and politeness of that illustrious assembly. The Princess Caroline was there, but neither her royal highness's presence, nor the laws of decorum, could restrain the glorious ardour of the combatants." This affair produced the following epigram :

" Old poets sing that beasts did dance
Whenever Orpheus play'd ;
So, to Faustina's charming voice
Wise Pembroke's asses bray'd."

Faustina's chief friends among the ladies were the Countess of Burlington and Lady Delawar. The men were generally on her side ; as she was handsomer and more agreeable than her rival.

These contentions were the more absurd, as the styles of the two singers were essentially different,

and the utmost admiration of the one could be no disparagement to the other. Their qualities are thus contrasted by Tosi, their contemporary, in his *Osservazzioni sopra il Canto Figurato*. "Their merit," he says, "is superior to all praise; for with equal strength, though in different styles, they help to keep up the tottering profession from immediately falling into ruin. The one is inimitable for a privileged gift of singing, and enchanting the world with an astonishing felicity in executing difficulties with a brilliancy, I know not whether derived from nature or art, which pleases to excess. The delightful, soothing cantabile of the other, joined to the sweetness of a fine voice, a perfect intonation, strictness of time, and the rarest productions of genius in her embellishments, are qualifications as peculiar and uncommon as they are difficult to be imitated. The pathos of the one and the rapidity of the other are distinctly characteristic. What a beautiful mixture it would be, if the excellencies of these two angelic beings could be united in a single individual!"

The interest of the opera was greatly injured by these disputes; and the directors fell upon a device to put an end to them by getting one of the rivals out of the way. The time for a new contract with each of them was at hand; and, as it was known that Lady Pembroke and Cuzzoni's other patronesses had made her swear never to take a smaller salary than Faustina, the directors resolved to offer her a

guinea less. To this resolution they steadily adhered : and Cuzzoni found herself ensnared by her oath into the necessity of leaving England. The following lines were written by Ambrose Philips on her departure.

"Little syren of the stage,
Charmer of an idle age,
Empty warbler, breathing lyre,
Wanton gale of fond desire;
Bane of every manly art,
Sweet enfeebler of the heart;
O, too pleasing is thy strain,
Hence to southern climes again!
Tuneful mischief, vocal spell,
To this island bid farewell;
Leave us as we ought to be,
Leave the Britons rough and free."

After her return to Italy she frequently met her rival Faustina, particularly at Venice in the carnivals of 1729 and 1730; but they do not appear ever to have sung upon the same stage. In 1734 she came to England a second time, being engaged to sing in the opera established by the nobility in opposition to Handel; and appears to have remained for two seasons. She came to London a third time in 1750, and had a benefit concert at the Haymarket theatre; but being now old, poor, and almost deprived of voice by infirmities, she failed to attract an audience. After this she went to Holland, where she was thrown into prison on account of her debts. Being, however, allowed to

go out and sing at the theatres, though in custody, she was at length enabled to pay her debts and obtain her release. In her latter days she subsisted, it is said, by button-making, and at last died in great indigence at Bologna in 1770.

Her misfortunes were caused by her folly, caprice, and extravagance. She squandered her earnings with the most reckless profusion, and quarrelled with her best friends from the ungovernable petulance of her temper. On one occasion, when, at a rehearsal, she pertinaciously refused to sing an air, belonging to her part, in one of Handel's operas, the composer brought her to reason by threatening to throw her out of the window.

As a singer, she is thus described by Dr. Burney: "She was endowed by nature with a voice that was equally clear, sweet, and flexible. It was difficult for the hearer to determine whether she most excelled in slow or rapid airs. A native warble enabled her to execute divisions with such facility as to conceal every appearance of difficulty; and so grateful and touching was the natural tone of her voice, that she rendered pathetic whatever she sung, in which she had leisure to unfold its whole volume. The art of conducting, sustaining, increasing, and diminishing her tones by minute degrees, acquired for her among professors the title of complete mistress of her art. In a *cantabile* air, though the notes she added were few, she never lost a favourable opportunity of enriching the *cantilena*

with all the refinements and embellishments of the time. Her shake was perfect; she had a creative fancy, and the power of occasionally accelerating and retarding the measure in the most artificial and able manner by what the Italians call *tempo rubato*. Her high notes were unrivalled in clearness and sweetness; and her intonations were so just and fixed, that it seemed as if it were not in her power to sing out of tune."

Carlo Broschi, surnamed Farinelli,* was born at Andria, a small town in the territory of Naples, in 1705. He received instructions in singing from Porpora, who, discovering his extraordinary vocal powers, bestowed the utmost care upon his education. When he was seventeen, he accompanied his instructor to Rome, Porpora being engaged to compose an opera for one of the theatres of that city; and here he performed the celebrated vocal feat which at once placed him above all his competitors. In an opera which was then performed, there was a song with an *obbligato* accompaniment for the trumpet, sung by Farinelli, and accompanied by a great performer on that instrument. Every night there was a contest between the singer and the trumpet-player, which gradually became more and more earnest, as the audience began to take an interest in it, and to take different sides. At length both parties seemed resolved to

* It is said that he derived this *cognomen* from the circumstance of his father having been a miller, or a dealer in flour.

bring it to an issue. After each of them had swelled out a note, and tried to rival the other in brilliancy and force, they both had a swell and a shake together, in the interval of a third, which was continued so long that both seemed to be exhausted; and the trumpeter at length gave it up, imagining, probably, that his antagonist was as much spent as himself. But Farinelli, with the greatest apparent ease, and with a smile on his face, as if to show that he had been all the while only sporting with his adversary, broke out all at once in the same breath with fresh vigour, and not only continued the swell and shake upon the note, but started off into a series of rapid and difficult divisions, till his voice was drowned by the acclamations of the audience. From that time he maintained an undisputed supremacy over all his contemporaries.

He afterwards sang in all the principal theatres in Italy, and then went to Vienna, which city he visited three times in the course of his life. He was received there with the same distinction as at other places; but he used to mention an admonition he received from the Emperor Charles VI., which he said, was of more use to him than all the precepts of his masters, or the examples of his rivals. The emperor, after listening to him one day with great admiration, told him, that in his singing he neither moved nor stood still like any other mortal;—all was supernatural: "But," he added, "these gigantic strides, these never-ending

notes, are merely surprising, and it is now time that you should think of pleasing: you are too lavish of the gifts with which nature has endowed you; if you wish to reach the heart, you must take a plainer and simpler road." These few words, Farinelli said, wrought an entire change in his style. From that time he studied to be simple and pathetic, as well as grand and powerful; and thus charmed his hearers as much as he astonished them.

In the year 1734 he came to England, being engaged to perform at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where the nobility's opera was carried on, under the direction of Porpora, in opposition to Handel.

The terms of Farinelli's engagement are not recorded; but the amount of his profits, arising from his salary, his benefit, and presents from people of distinction, were estimated at about 5,000*l.* a year. To admire Farinelli became a rage, which led the votaries of fashion, not the lovers of music, into extravagant folly and absurdity. Hogarth, in one of the numbers of his *Rake's Progress*, has ridiculed the infatuation of the hour. He represents his hero at his levee, surrounded by toad-eaters and hangers-on—a bravo, a jockey, a dancing-master, a fencing-master, and others. A musical composer is seated at a harpsichord, and from the back of his chair hangs a long scroll, on which is written, "A list of the rich presents Signor Farinelli, the Italian singer,

condescended to accept of the English nobility and gentry, for one night's performance in the opera of Artaxerxes. A pair of diamond knee-buckles, presented by ————————, a diamond ring, by ————, a bank-note enclosed in a rich gold case, by ————————, a gold snuff-box, chased with the story of Orpheus charming the brutes, by T. Rakewell, esq., 100*l.*, 200*l.*, 100*l.*" These were presents mentioned in the newspapers of the day as having been actually made. On the floor lies a picture representing Farinelli on a pedestal, with an altar before him, on which are several flaming hearts. Near him stand a number of people with extended arms, offering him presents; and at the foot of the altar is a lady kneeling, with a label issuing from her mouth, on which are the words, "One God, one Farinelli,"—an impious expression really used by a lady of fashion in her affected ecstasies during his performance of one of his songs. During his engagement at the Haymarket, Sir John Hawkins says, "All the world flocked thither, even aldermen and other citizens, with their wives and daughters, to so great a degree, that in the city it became a proverbial expression, that those who had not heard Farinelli sing, and Foster* preach,

* A celebrated Anabaptist preacher, who lectured on Sunday evenings in the Old Jewry. Pope, who knew him, and frequently went to hear him preach, thus mentions him in the *Epilogue to the Satires:*

"Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
Ten metropolitans in preaching well."

were not qualified to appear in genteel company."

At the first private rehearsal after his arrival here, in Signora Cuzzoni's apartments, Lord Cooper, who acted as manager of the opera, observing that the band did not follow him, but were all gaping with wonder as if thunderstruck, desired them to be attentive; when they all confessed that they had been so overpowered with admiration and astonishment as to be unable to accompany him.*

With the exception of a short excursion to Paris in the summer of 1736, Farinelli remained in London till May 1737. During the time of his stay, he was employed in supporting the party by whom he was engaged in their struggle against Handel; a struggle, which though unsuccessful on their part, was ruinous to the object of their hostility, and injurious to the interests of music, from the dissensions and factions to which it gave rise among the patrons of the art. Although the admiration of Farinelli's powers, among the real dilettanti, continued unabated, yet the foolish and ignorant rage caused by his arrival gave way to the excitement produced by greater novelties. "There is always such a rage for novelty at the opera," says Cibber in his *Apology*, published in 1739, "that within these two years we have seen even Farinelli sing to an audience of five-and-thirty pounds." When he

* This remarkable circumstance was related to Dr. Burney by one of the band.

left England, however, it was with the intention of returning the following year, as he had entered into an engagement to that effect with the noble managers of the opera. But this was prevented by an invitation which he received to visit the court of Spain. In his way to Madrid he sang at Paris, where, according to Riccoboni, he enchanted the French themselves, though the prejudice against Italian music and Italian singing was then at its height.

Farinelli's journey to Madrid was in consequence of an invitation from the queen of Spain. Her husband, Philip V., laboured under a mental disease, which exhibited itself in a dejection of spirits, rendering him incapable of attending to business, or of taking the ordinary care of his person. He would not even allow himself to be shaved, and remained in a state of total apathy. He had always shown great love of music, and sensibility to its effects; it was therefore determined to try its power, as a remedy for his disease; and it was with this view that the greatest singer of the age was called in as his physician.

On Farinelli's arrival, the queen contrived that there should be a concert in a room adjoining the king's apartment; and the singer performed one of his most pathetic airs. Philip appeared at first surprised, and then moved. At the end of the second air he called the singer into his chamber, loaded him with compliments and kind expres-

sions, asked him how he could sufficiently recompense such talents, and assured him that he could deny him nothing. Farinelli, who had been previously instructed, only begged that his majesty would allow his attendants to shave and dress him, and that he would endeavour to appear in council as usual. From this time the king's disease gave way to medical treatment; and the singer had the honour (to which he was undoubtedly entitled) of the cure.

Farinelli was taken into the service of the court. A pension of about 3,000*l.* per annum was settled upon him, and he was not permitted to sing any longer in public. During the first ten years of his residence at the court of Spain, he sang every night to the king the same four airs, one of which was the famous "Pallido il sole" of Hasse. By singing to his majesty every evening, his favour increased to such a degree, that he was honoured with the order of St. Jago, and acquired so much influence that he was regarded as the king's first minister. Raised to such a height, most men would have been giddy with their elevation; but Farinelli never forgot his true position. He remembered that he was a musician, and conducted himself to the Spanish nobility with that proper humility which became his situation; so that, instead of becoming an object of their jealousy and hatred, he gained their confidence and esteem. These sentiments were confirmed when it was observed,

that he kept himself entirely aloof from every species of intrigue, and never made use of his influence for any selfish or unworthy motive.

Several pleasing anecdotes are related of him at this period. One day, as he was going to the king's closet, to which he had access at all times, he overheard an old officer of the guard curse him, and say to another, "Honours can be heaped on such scoundrels as this, while a poor soldier, like myself, after thirty years' service, remains unnoticed." Farinelli, without seeming to hear this reproach, took occasion to remind the king that he had neglected an old servant, and procured a regiment for the man who had spoken of him so harshly. In passing out, after leaving the king, he gave the officer his commission, telling him that he had heard him complain of having served thirty years without promotion; "but," he added, "you did wrong to accuse the king of neglecting to reward your zeal."

A circumstance, which happened to Farinelli during the first year of his residence at Madrid, has been made the subject of a favourite little German opera. The singer ordered a superb suit of clothes for a court gala, and when the tailor brought it home, asked him for his bill. "I have made no bill, sir," said the tailor, "nor do I intend to make one. Instead of money, I have a favour to beg of you. I know that what I desire is inestimable, and fit only for monarchs; but since I

have had the honour to work for a person of whom every body speaks with rapture, all the payment I shall ever require is a song." Farinelli tried in vain to prevail on the tailor to take his money. At length, giving way to the tradesman's humble entreaties, and probably more flattered by this tribute to his talents than by the applauses he had received in the saloons of princes, he sat down to the harpsichord, and sang some of his finest airs, enjoying the pleasure and astonishment of his enchanted hearer: and the more the poor tailor seemed charmed and affected, the more Farinelli exerted himself in displaying every species of excellence. When he had done, the tailor thanked him in the most rapturous and grateful manner, and took his leave. "No, my friend," said Farinelli, "I am a little proud, and it is perhaps from that circumstance that I have acquired some small superiority over other singers. I have given way to your weakness; and it is but fair that you, in your turn, should indulge me in mine." And, taking out his purse, he insisted on the tailor receiving nearly double the amount of his bill.

After the death of Philip V., Farinelli continued to enjoy the favour of his successor, Ferdinand VI., by whom he was dignified with the order of Calatrava. He persuaded that prince to establish an opera, of which he was director. He brought from Italy the best composers and singers of the time,

and got his friend Metastasio to write for this theatre.

On the death of Ferdinand, Farinelli was dismissed from his employment and obliged to leave Spain ; but his pension was still continued. Charles III., the brother and successor of Ferdinand, was not only without taste for music, but had a positive dislike to it, and would not suffer a voice or an instrument to be heard in his palace. He ordered Farinelli to return to Italy ; but, by a strange caprice, stipulated, in consideration of Farinelli's retaining his pension, that he should not return to Naples, but should spend the remainder of his days at Bologna. It was with much sorrow that he left the country in which he had lived four-and-twenty years, and in which he had formed many friendships and connexions. There cannot be a stronger proof of the prudence and moderation of his character than the circumstance of his having been so many years the chief favourite of the sovereign, a situation in itself sufficiently obnoxious, without having incurred odium or made himself enemies.

In Metastasio's correspondence there is a great deal of evidence of the estimation in which Farinelli was held in Spain. In one of his letters to Farinelli the poet says, " The Spanish minister plenipotentiary, Don Antonio de Azlor, from your court, is arrived, and pleases extremely here. He

is interrogated by everybody concerning you, and all are extremely satisfied with his answers. He assures us that your prosperity has not in the least altered the gentleness and moderation of your character : a rock, according to ancient and modern examples, extremely difficult to avoid ; and much more amid the favours than the persecutions of fortune. He says that, though raised to such an enviable situation, you have not an enemy. To obtain forgiveness for such prosperity, I can easily conceive how wise, how disinterested, and how beneficent must be your conduct. I congratulate you on those inestimable characteristics, which are your own, and not the gifts of fortune ; and I congratulate myself for having known and loved you before you had given such distinguished proofs of your estimable and amiable qualities." In another of Metastasio's letters to Farinelli, written in 1752, when the latter was at the height of his favour and fortune, the poet says, " I have seen for a short time Count Esterhazy, after his return from Madrid, and have found him full of you. He regards you as a hero, and has desired me to tell you so ; which will oblige me likewise to love you more than ever. At this last assertion I cannot help laughing ; but I own that to hear you thus praised affords me the same pleasure as if it was myself ; so much does our old, true, and mutual friendship seem to have united us together and consolidated

our interests. God preserve you, my dear *Gemello*,* and inspire others to think as you do."

In a letter written in 1756, Metastasio says, "At length our noble and worthy Monsignor Migazzi, archbishop of Vienna, is arrived here from Madrid. I have put his patience to extraordinary trials, by my numerous and minute questions concerning your health, your way of life, your friendship for me; and the public approbation which you have so well contrived to merit. He went so far as to tell me, that, aware of your heroic conduct in circumstances so seducing, he might venture to canonise you without the fear of opposition. Figure to yourself, if you can, how sweet such music must be to the ears of your most faithful and affectionate *Gemello*." On the death of Farinelli's royal patron, Ferdinand, in 1759, Metastasio wrote him thus: "Yesterday was delivered to me your letter of the second of August, from Villaviciosa: and, though tinctured with the gloomy colour reflected from your painful situation, it was great consolation to me to find that, with your feeble state of health, you have had sufficient vigour to resist so tremendous a shock. The news of your beneficent king having been delivered from his sufferings arrived at Vienna four days before your letter. It is to be

* Twin; a term of endearment constantly used by Metastasio in his letters to Farinelli, implying the constant union which had subsisted between them from their youth upwards.

hoped that the melancholy state in which he so long remained without the smallest chance of recovery diminished the violence of a blow which must have been expected, and which delivered the poor prince from the painful existence in which he languished. And yet, with all these solid reasons, I judge, my dear *Gemello*, by the emotions of my own heart, what your feelings must be; but I promise myself much more from your virtue than mine; because the examples of moderation which you have so long furnished to the world in the midst of the most intoxicating smiles of fortune, give us assurances of your meeting her frowns with equal fortitude. Be of comfort, my dear *Gemello;* inconstancy in human affairs is the universal condition on which we live, as every mortal knows by woful experience. No misfortune, however, can rob you of the praise of not suffering yourself to be seduced or dazzled by the blaze with which you were so long surrounded."

It appears from many passages in Metastasio's letters, that Farinelli's banishment from the country in which he had spent the best period of his life, continued long to prey upon his mind and depress his spirits, though he bore with firmness what he felt as a heavy calamity. "Your last letter," says Metastasio to him in 1764, "really consoled me. From the serenity and pleasantry with which it is coloured from the beginning to the end, I con-

ceive that you are at length arrived at the secret of wiping from your mind that cursed soot which has discoloured it so long. I congratulate you on your success in an enterprise which borders on a species of heroism of which few are capable. We have an infinite number of great men, venerated as models of knowledge and prudence, who have sunk under catastrophes much less violent than yours. May happiness, therefore, attend my dear *Gemello*, who has proved himself as much superior to adversity as to prosperity, and who knows how to estimate human happiness better than those who call themselves philosophers, and does not need the jargon of the schools to enable him to stand firm and immovable in every blast. Heaven bless you, and keep you in this wise and placid state for at least half a century!"

In 1779, when Metastasio and Farinelli were both aged men, the venerable poet says, in a letter to a lady of Bologna, "You have obliged me extremely, my dear Signora Giacinta, by honouring me with the continuance of your correspondence, and assuring me of the affectionate remembrance which my dear and respected friend Signor Carlo Broschi retains for me, which I return with a mutual and most constant reciprocation. I love and esteem him as much as it is possible for a man to be loved and esteemed, who has so far surpassed all his peers, not only by his excellence in the

charming art which he professed, but by the uncommon virtues of his mind, which have rendered him amiable and admirable in every situation into which fortune has thrown him." The last use which Metastasio made of his pen was to write to Farinelli, in 1782, after an uninterrupted friendship of upwards of sixty years.

Dr. Burney, who visited Farinelli at Bologna in 1770, and was hospitably entertained by him, describes him as tall and thin, but by no means infirm, and younger in appearance than Dr. Burney expected. He had long left off singing, but amused himself still on the harpsichord and *viol d'amour*. He had a number of harpsichords made in different countries, which he had named, according to the place they held in his favour, after the greatest of the Italian painters. His first favourite was a pianoforte, made at Florence so early as the year 1730, on which was inscribed in gold letters *Raffaelle d'Urbino;* then he had a Correggio, a Guido, a Titian, and others. He played a considerable time upon his Raphael with great judgment and delicacy. He had a sister living in his house with her two children, one of which was an infant, and he was doatingly fond of it, though it was cross, sickly, homely, and unamiable: "a convincing proof," says Burney, "among others, to me, that he was designed by nature for family attentions and domestic comforts."

He was always most polite and attentive to the English who visited him in his retirement, and seemed to remember the kindness and favour of individuals, more than the neglect of the public during the last year of his residence in London. When the Marquis of Carmarthen paid him a visit, on being told that he was the son of his patron and friend the Duke of Leeds, Farinelli threw his arms round his neck and embraced him with tears of joy. He died at Bologna in 1782, in the seventy-seventh year of his age.

It is evident from the whole tenor of Farinelli's life, that he was a man of a powerful and well-regulated mind, and of a very amiable disposition. During the whole of Metastasio's life, he was that great poet's principal correspondent; and the topics discussed in their letters, frequently involving nice and profound speculations on the principles of poetry and music, show that the one, as well as the other, was possessed of an enlarged and cultivated understanding. As a singer, there is every reason to believe, from all that can be gathered from contemporary accounts, that he has never yet been surpassed. In respect to the execution of musical passages, though he transcended any notion that had previously been formed of the powers of the human voice, and though it would seem that the composers of those times were unable to invent passages sufficiently difficult to display his

force and rapidity, yet the utmost difficulties of this kind which he achieved, (as may be seen by the passages of execution in his *bravura* songs,) are within the reach of any ordinary singer of the present day. But none of his successors, it may be confidently said, has excelled him, or even equalled him, in beauty of voice and skill in its management, in truth of intonation, in purity of style, and, above all, in the power of moving the feelings of his hearers. Of this power a most striking illustration is afforded by an incident which would have appeared incredible had he not confirmed its truth to Dr. Burney. When Senesino and he were in England at the same time, they had not for some time an opportunity of hearing each other, in consequence of their engagements at different theatres. At last, however, they were both engaged to sing on the same stage. Senesino had the part of a furious tyrant, and Farinelli that of an unfortunate hero in chains; but, in the course of the first air, the captive so softened the heart of the tyrant, that Senesino, forgetting his stage-character, ran to Farinelli and embraced him in his own.

Francesco Bernardi, commonly called Senesino, was born at Sienna, about the year 1680. We first hear of him as a celebrated singer when he was at Dresden, in the year 1719. The Italian opera of that city was then on a splendid footing, and the company consisted of the greatest singers

of the time. According to Quantz,* who heard Senesino at that time, he had a powerful, clear, equal, and sweet *contralto* voice, with a perfect intonation and an excellent shake. His manner of singing was masterly and his elocution unrivalled. Though he never loaded *adagios* with too many ornaments, yet he delivered the original and essential notes with the utmost refinement. He sang *allegros* with great fire, and marked rapid divisions, from the chest, in an articulate and pleasing manner. His countenance was well adapted to the stage, and his action was natural and noble. To these qualities he joined a majestic figure; but his aspect and deportment were more suited to the part of a hero than of a lover.

When the establishment for the performance of operas in London, under the title of the Royal Academy of Music, was set on foot by a body of the nobility and gentry in 1720, Handel, who was commissioned to form a company, hearing of the splendour of the Dresden opera, took a journey to that city, and engaged Senesino and several other members of the company. He was the principal singer in Handel's operas till the year 1726, when he found it necessary, from the state of his health, to go to Italy. In 1730 he returned to England, and resumed his situation at the Haymarket. When

* Burney's State of Music in Germany, vol. ii.

the musical quarrels broke out, which ended in the establishment of an opera, in 1733, in opposition to Handel, Senesino became a member of the hostile company : but Farinelli being engaged by the same party in 1734, Senesino soon afterwards left England. He retired to his native country of Tuscany, and died about the year 1750.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Caffarelli—Gizziello—Carestini—Guarducci — Durastanti—Guadagni—Mingotti—Gabrielli—Want of tenor and bass singers.

Caffarelli, or Caffariello, was born in 1703. He was the son of a Neapolitan peasant, and his name was Gaetano Majorano, though he is commonly known by the above surname. His natural gifts attracted the notice of Porpora, who gave instructions at the same time to him and to Farinelli, whose origin was equally obscure. Porpora, it is said, taught him in a very extraordinary manner. For a period of five years he permitted him to sing nothing but a series of scales and exercises, all of which he wrote down successively on a single sheet of paper. In the sixth year he proceeded to give his scholar instructions in articulation, pronunciation, and declamation. Caffarelli submitted without a murmur to this unexampled discipline; though, even at the end of six years, he imagined he had got a very little way beyond the mere rudiments of the art: but, to his astonishment, his master one day thus addressed him:—"Young man, you may

now leave me. You have nothing more to learn from me, and are the greatest singer in the world." This story has been repeated by the best informed writers, and, no doubt, is founded in truth, though with much exaggeration. A slow and progressive method of tuition is certainly the only way to produce excellence ; but this seems to be carrying the principle to a most extravagant length. None but a plodding drudge, without a spark of genius, could have submitted to a process which would have been too much for the patient endurance even of a Russian serf ; or if a single spark had existed at first, it must have been extinguished by so barbarous a treatment.

Be this, however, as it may, Caffarelli did become one of the greatest singers of his time, though he did not arrive rapidly at the height of his fame. His first appearance in public was at Rome, in 1726; and he gained such reputation in Italy, that he was engaged, in 1738, to supply the place of Farinelli at the London opera-house. He was not very successful here. He had to contend with the disadvantage arising from the remembrance, yet recent, of Farinelli's wonderful powers ; and he was never well, or in good voice, during the time he remained in London, which was only a single season.

At a subsequent period Caffarelli was looked upon as Farinelli's rival, and many critics considered him the greater singer of the two. Among these

was Porpora, who had been master to both. Though he could not bear the insolence of Caffarelli's disposition, he used to say that he was the greatest singer that Italy had ever produced. At the marriage of the king of Sardinia, then prince of Savoy, with the infanta of Spain, who had long been Farinelli's scholar, it was with great difficulty that Caffarelli was prevailed upon to go to Turin to sing at the royal nuptials. Being obliged to go by an order of the king of Naples, he was sullen and not disposed to exert himself, saying, that he had lost his book of closes on the road, and should be able to do nothing. This was told to his Sardinian majesty, who did not well know how to treat such impertinence, Caffarelli not being his subject. But, on the first night of performance, the prince of Savoy went behind the scenes, as the opera was going to begin, and said to Caffarelli that he was very happy to see him, though his princess thought it hardly possible that any singer could give him pleasure after Farinelli. "Now, Caffarelli," added the prince, clapping him on the shoulder, "do exert yourself a little, and cure the princess of this prejudice in her master's favour." Caffarelli's vanity was piqued; "Sir," he exclaimed, "her highness shall to-night hear two Farinellis in one!" and, exerting all his faculties, he sang in a manner which produced acclamations of delight and astonishment.

He went to Vienna in 1749. Metastasio, in one of his letters to Farinelli, gives an account of his reception in the Austrian capital.

"You will be curious," says the poet, "to know how Caffarelli has been received. The wonders related of him by his adherents had excited expectations of something above humanity; but the first night he absolutely displeased everybody. He said he was so oppressed and disconcerted by the presence of their imperial majesties that he could not recover himself; and, indeed, in the subsequent representations he regained his credit so much, that some of the nobility and gentry now exalt him to the firmament, and even go so far as to make heretical comparisons. There are, however, innumerable critics who find his voice strong, but false, screaming and disobedient; so that he can do nothing considerable without forcing it, and when forced it becomes harsh and disagreeable. They say he has no judgment, and that by frequently attempting what he is unable to execute he leaves it unfinished; that he has an old-fashioned and bad taste; and that they can discover in his graces the antique and stale flourishes of Nicolini and Matuccio. They maintain that he treads the stage abominably; that in the recitatives he is an old nun; and that in all he sings there is a whimsical tone of lamentation sufficient to sour the gayest allegro. They allow that he can sometimes please excessively, but say that these happy moments are uncertain,

and depend on the caprice of his voice and temper, and do not make amends for the suffering produced by his imperfections. You will be pleased to observe that I only quote, but do not decide; on the contrary, I protest to you that I have all the esteem for the performer which he merits. The failure of the first night, the diversity of opinions, and the little appearance there is of his having acquired the favour of your august patroness, a princess whom you know to be an exquisite judge of music, have humbled him so extremely, that from his present modesty and resignation you would not know him. If he continues in this disposition, I hope he will acquire many of those suffrages which were at first refused him."

His arrogance and turbulent spirit, however, speedily revived, and produced a *fracas* of which Metastasio gives the following lively account in one of his letters to the Princess di Belmonte.

"In exchange for the musical news with which your excellency has honoured me concerning our amiable friend Monticelli, I shall give you some military tidings of our valiant Caffarelli, who a few days ago gave public proofs of his being no less a votary of Mars than of Apollo. For my misfortune I was not present at these warlike feats, but the following is a most faithful narrative.

"The poet of this theatre is a Milanese young man, descended from very worthy parents; but inconsiderate, a great admirer of the fair sex, despising

money, and as deficient in judgment as he is rich in talent. To this young author the managers of the theatre have entrusted the whole arrangements of the stage. I know not whether it proceeded from rivalry in abilities or in personal beauty, but the poet and the singer have all along been on the *qui vive*, and have treated each other with sneers and sarcasms. At length Migliavacca (the poet) issued orders for a rehearsal of the opera in preparation. All the performers obeyed the summons except Caffarelli; he appeared, however, at the end of the rehearsal, and asked the company, with a very disdainful air, what was the use of these rehearsals? The conductor answered, in a voice of authority, that no one was accountable to him for what was done; that he ought to be glad that his failure in attendance had been suffered; that his presence or absence was of little consequence to the success of the opera, but that whatever he chose to do himself, he ought at least to let others do their duty. Caffarelli, in a great rage, exclaimed that he who had ordered such a rehearsal was a solemn coxcomb. At this all the patience and dignity of the poet forsook him; and getting into a towering passion, he honoured the singer with all those glorious titles which Caffarelli had earned in various parts of Europe, and slightly touched, but in lively colours, some of the most memorable particulars of his life: nor was he likely soon to come to a close; but the hero of the panegyric, cutting the thread of

his own praise, boldly called out to his eulogist, 'Follow me, if thou hast courage, to a place where there is none to assist thee!' and, moving towards the door, beckoned to him to come out. The poet hesitated a moment, and then saying with a smile, 'Truly such an adversary makes me blush; but come along, since it is a christian act to chastise a fool or a madman,'—advanced to take the field. But Caffarelli, who had flattered himself, perhaps, that the muses would not be so valiant, or imagined that, according to the rules of the criminal law, a delinquent ought to be punished *in loco patrati delicti*, changed his first resolution of seeking another field of battle, and intrenching himself behind the door, drew his bright blade, and presented its point to the enemy. Nor did the other refuse the combat—

> 'Ma fiero anch' egli il rilucente acciaro
> Liberò dalla placida guarina.'

The by-standers tremble; each calls on his tutelar saint, expecting every moment to see poetical and vocal blood besprinkle the harpsichords and double basses. But at length, the Signora Tesi, rising from under her canopy, where till now she had remained a most tranquil spectator, walked with a slow and stately step towards the combatants; when —O sovereign power of beauty!—the frantic Caffarelli, even in the fiercest paroxysm of his wrath, captivated and appeased by this unexpected tenderness, runs with rapture to meet her, lays his sword

at her feet, begs pardon for his error, and generously sacrificing to her his vengeance, seals, with a thousand kisses upon her hand, his protestations of obedience, respect, and humility. The nymph signifies her forgiveness by a nod; the poet sheaths his sword; the spectators begin to breathe again; and the tumultuous assembly breaks up amid the joyous sounds of laughter. In collecting the numbers of the wounded and the slain, none was found but the poor copyist, who, in trying to part the combatants, had received a small contusion in the clavicula of the foot, from an involuntary kick of the poet's Pegasus. Next day the battle was commemorated in an anonymous sonnet; and soon after an answer was produced by the belligerent poet. I hope to procure a copy of both to enclose in this epistle. To-day the German comedians are to represent this extraordinary event on the stage. They say that already not a place is to be had for love or money, and it is not yet twelve o'clock. I should like to be one of the audience, if I had an invisible ring."

Caffarelli's success at Vienna does not appear to have been equal to his deserts as an artist. His conceit and self-sufficiency must have created an unfavourable impression; and Metastasio's opinion, we may suppose, was in some degree influenced by the circumstance that Caffarelli looked upon himself, and was looked upon by others, as the rival

of Farinelli, to whom the poet was so greatly attached.

Mr. Garrick, who heard Caffarelli at Naples in 1764, when he was turned of sixty, thus speaks of him in a letter to Dr. Burney: "Yesterday we attended the ceremony of making a nun; she was the daughter of a duke, and the whole was conducted with great splendour and magnificence. The church was richly ornamented, and there were two large bands of music of all kinds. The consecration was performed with great solemnity, and I was very much affected; and to crown the whole, the principal part was sung by the famous Caffarelli, who, though old, has pleased me more than all the singers I ever heard. He *touched* me; and it is the first time I have been touched since I came into Italy."

Caffarelli spent his latter days at Naples, in the enjoyment of a large fortune which he had made by his profession. He resided in a magnificent house which he had built for himself, and over the door of which he had placed this inscription: "*Amphion Thebas, ego domum.*" He bought a dukedom, after his own decease, for his nephew, who accordingly became Duca di Santi Dorato. Caffarelli died in 1783, in his eightieth year.

GIZZIELLO (whose name was CONTI) was engaged by Handel, and came to England in 1736. Though then a young man, he had gained great reputation in Italy; but such were his modesty and diffidence,

that when he first heard Farinelli at a private rehearsal, he burst into tears, and fainted away from despondency. He was in London for two seasons, and received with much favour. His voice was then a very high soprano, and his style remarkable for pathos, delicacy, and refinement. His manner of singing is said to have had a considerable effect in modernising the character of Handel's opera airs.

When Gizziello first sang at Rome, before he came to England, his performance was considered so admirable that it became the subject of conversation throughout Italy. Caffarelli, who was then at Naples, and at the height of his fame, was so struck by what he heard of the young singer, that he seized the first opportunity, when he could be spared from the opera, of going to Rome to hear him. He travelled post all night, and arriving at Rome the following evening, entered the pit wrapped up in a cloak, and unknown to anybody. Gizziello sang; and, when he had done, Caffarelli cried out with a loud voice, "Bravo, bravissimo, Gizziello! è Caffarelli che ti lo dice!" and, immediately quitting the theatre, set out the same night on his return to Naples.

After leaving England, Gizziello pursued his studies so diligently and successfully, that he even contested the palm with Farinelli at Madrid. He was at Lisbon during the earthquake in 1775; and his mind was so deeply impressed by the horror of

that tremendous visitation, that he retired into a monastery, where he ended his days.

Carestini first appeared at Rome in 1721. In 1723 he was at Prague, during the great musical performances there, on the occasion of the coronation of the emperor Charles VI. as king of Bohemia; on which occasion an opera was performed in the open air, in which the chorus consisted of a hundred voices, and the orchestra of two hundred instruments. He came to England in 1733, being engaged by Handel to supply the place of Senesino, who, with almost the whole of Handel's company, had deserted him and joined the rival establishment set on foot by the nobility. Carestini remained about seven years in England; a proof of the estimation in which he was held. After leaving England he sang for many years in Italy, Germany, and Russia, with the highest reputation. He died about the year 1758. "Carestini's person," says Burney, "was tall, beautiful, and majestic. He was a very animated and intelligent actor; and having a considerable portion of enthusiasm in his composition, with a lively and inventive imagination, he rendered everything he sung interesting by good taste, energy, and judicious embellishments. He manifested great agility in the execution of difficult divisions from the chest in a most articulate and admirable manner."

Among the principal singers of this period was

Guarducci, a pupil of the famous Bolognese school of singing conducted by Bernacchi. Guarducci came to England in 1767, and remained for several seasons. He was then somewhat in years, tall and awkward in his figure and an inanimate actor; circumstances which at first created a prepossession against him; but his merit at length was recognised. "He soon discovered," says Burney, "that a singer could not captivate the English by tricks or instrumental execution, and told me some years after that the gravity of our taste had been of great use to him." The English are as liable to be caught by tricks of execution as their neighbours; but it would rather appear that Guarducci's powers of execution were insufficient to produce this effect. "He was," continues Burney, "the plainest and most simple singer, of the first class, I ever heard. All his effects were produced by expression and high finishing, nor did he ever aim at execution." Such qualities will be appreciated by all hearers, however much they may be dazzled by the performance of brilliant difficulties.

Margherita Durastanti was engaged by Handel at the same time with Senesino, and came with him to England. She sang in the operas composed by Handel, Buononcini, and Attilio Ariosti, till the year 1723, when she quitted England, finding herself unable to contend with the superior powers of Cuzzoni. She took a formal leave of the English nation, by singing on the stage the following song,

written for her by Pope, at the desire of her patron the Earl of Peterborough.

" Generous, gay, and gallant nation,
Bold in arms and bright in arts ;
Land secure from all invasion,
All but Cupid's gentle darts !
From your charms, oh who would run ?
Who would leave you for the sun ?

Happy soil, adieu, adieu !
Let old charmers yield to new ;
In arms, in arts, be still more shining ;
All your joys be still increasing,
All your tastes be still refining,
All your jars for ever ceasing :
But let old charmers yield to new ;
Happy soil, adieu, adieu."*

* This effusion was thus burlesqued by Arbuthnot.

" Puppies, whom I now am leaving,
Merry sometimes, always mad,
Who lavish most when debts are craving,
On fool, on farce, and masquerade !
Who would not from such bubbles run,
And leave such blessings for the sun ?

Happy soil, and simple crew !
Let old sharpers yield to new.
All your tastes be still refining ;
All your nonsense still more shining :
Blest in some Berenstadt or Boschi,
He more awkward, he more husky ;
And never want, when these are lost t' us,
Another Heidegger and Faustus.
Happy soil, and simple crew !
Let old sharpers yield to new !
Bubbles all, adieu, adieu !"

In the *Evening Post* of 7th March, 1721, there is the following paragraph: "Last Thursday his majesty was pleased to stand godfather, and the princess and the Lady Bruce godmothers, to a daughter of Mrs. Durastanti, chief singer in the opera-house. The Marquis Visconti for the king, and the Lady Lichfield for the princess." This circumstance deserves mention, as a remarkable indication of the respect which was paid in the highest quarters to this lady's private character.

Gaetano Guadagni was a native of Vicenza. At an early age, and before he had acquired any considerable reputation, he came to England, in 1748, in a company of singers who performed burlettas, or *opere buffe*, with great success. Though his style was then unformed, the excellence of his voice attracted the notice of Handel, who employed him to sing in the oratorios of the *Messiah* and *Sampson*. During his first residence in England, he was more noticed for his singing in English than in Italian. When he performed in the English opera of the *Fairies*, Garrick took pleasure in giving him instructions in the art of acting. He left London about the year 1753; and in the following year was at Lisbon with Gizziello, and narrowly escaped destruction during the earthquake. When Gizziello, after this calamity, retired to a monastery, he persuaded the young singer to accompany him in his retreat, where, during a considerable time, he took pains in directing his studies; and it is to

this circumstance that Guadagni's subsequent excellence and celebrity may be ascribed. After singing for several years, with great reputation, in Italy and Germany, he returned to England in 1769. He left this country in 1771, after having, notwithstanding his great talents, made himself unpopular by an uncompromising and troublesome temper. He quarrelled with the honourable Mr. Hobart, then patentee of the opera, on the ground of some imaginary affront offered to his sister; and his determination to support the dignity and propriety of his dramatic character by refusing to bow when applauded, or to injure the effect of an interesting scene by repeating an air when *encored*, so offended the public, that at length he never appeared without being hissed. The musical world was then split into factions and cabals; and his enemies used to begin an encore with which he would not comply, for the purpose of bringing upon him the indignation of the audience.

In 1772, Dr. Burney, in his travels through Germany, found Guadagni at Munich, in the service of the Elector of Bavaria, and enjoying the respect and honour due to his talents. He entertained the tourist with great hospitality, and spoke of individuals in England with much gratitude and kindness, but complained bitterly (and seemingly with reason) of the treatment he had received from the public. He finally retired to his native country, and died at Padua in 1786.

Burney, describing Guadagni during his last residence in England, says, " As an actor he seems to have had no equal on any stage in Europe: his figure was uncommonly elegant and noble; his countenance replete with beauty, intelligence, and dignity; and his attitudes and gestures were so full of grace and propriety that they would have been excellent studies for a statuary."—As a singer, his style was very peculiar. " The music he sung," says Burney, " was the simplest imaginable; a few notes with frequent pauses, and opportunities of being liberated from the composer and the band, were all he wanted. And in these seemingly extemporaneous effusions he proved the inherent power of melody totally divorced from harmony, and unassisted even by unisonous accompaniment. Surprised at such great effects from causes apparently so small, I frequently tried to analyse the pleasure he communicated to the audience, and found that it chiefly arose from his artful manner of diminishing the tones of his voice like the dying notes of an Æolian harp. Most other singers captivate by a swell or *messa de voce;* but Guadagni, after beginning a note or passage with all the force he could safely exert, fined it off to a thread, and gave it all the effect of extreme distance." His voice, however, was then comparatively thin and feeble, having lost a portion of the power and volume which it possessed when he was formerly in England; but, notwithstanding this defect, he must be

considered as a dramatic singer of the highest class.

Caterina Mingotti was born at Naples about the year 1726. Her father, an officer in the Austrian service, carried her, in her infancy, into Germany; and, being soon afterwards left an orphan, she was placed by an uncle in a convent at Gratz in Silesia, where her fine voice and ardent love of music induced the abbess to give her a musical education. When she was fourteen, she was left, by the death of her uncle, in a destitute situation, and was soon afterwards induced to marry Signor Mingotti, manager of the opera at Dresden, a man advanced in years. At Dresden she attracted the notice of Porpora, who procured an engagement for her at the theatre, where, it is said, her performance made so great an impression, that the celebrated Faustina was impelled by jealousy to leave Dresden. The fame she acquired in that city procured for her an invitation to Naples, where she first appeared in Aristea, in the *Olimpiade*, composed by Galuppi, and gained prodigious applause, not only by her singing, but the new reading which, as an actress, she gave the character.

From Naples she returned to Dresden, and afterwards went to Madrid, where she sang, with Gizziello, in the operas, under the direction of Farinelli, who was so rigid in his restrictions, that he would not allow her to sing anywhere but in the opera at court, or even to practise in a room next

the street. She was requested to sing at private concerts by many of the Spanish nobility, but could not obtain permission from the opera-director, who carried his rigour so far as to deny a pregnant lady of high rank the pleasure of hearing her, though she was unable to go to the theatre, and declared that she *longed* for a song from Mingotti. In Spain this species of mental malady is treated with the utmost attention. The lady's husband complained to the king of Farinelli's obduracy, which, he said, might be fatal to his wife and his child; and the consequence was a royal mandate, ordering Mingotti to receive the lady at her house and gratify her longing.

After remaining two years in Spain, Signora Mingotti came to England in 1754, and excited unbounded admiration. She soon engaged in disputes with Vaneschi, the manager of the opera, which occasioned violent feuds and animosities in the musical world, almost every person of fashion thinking it necessary, in supporting that character, to side with one or other of the parties.

Many amusing anecdotes are told of the absurdities committed, under the influence of this musical mania, by the votaries of *ton*. Mrs. Fox Lane, afterwards Lady Bingley, a warm patroness of Mingotti, desirous to enlist in her cause the Hon. General Crewe, gave him one day a long history of the disputes between the singer and the manager, appealing to him for his judgment on so momentous a subject.

The general listened with much seeming attention; but when she thought him sufficiently impressed with the wrongs of Signora Mingotti, he asked her very quietly, "And pray, madam, who is Signora Mingotti?"—"Get out of my house!" cried the lady in a passion, "you shall never hear her sing another note at my concerts as long as you live."—Admission to Mrs. Lane's concerts, at which Mingotti and the famous violinist Giardini used exclusively to perform, was considered, like the *entrée* to Almack's at present, as the conclusive stamp to the character of a person of fashion. There was no sacrifice or mortification to which fashionable people would not submit in order to obtain it: "And," says Burney, "*la padrona della casa* lost but few opportunities of letting them know the value she set on her invitations, by using them like dogs when they were there. Whenever a benefit was in contemplation for one of her *protégés*, taking care of the honour of her guests, she obliged them to behave with due gratitude and munificence on the occasion. 'Come!' she would say to her friends, 'give me five guineas,'—a demand as implicitly obeyed as if made on the road. Nor had any one, who wished ever to be admitted into such good company again, the courage to ask the occasion of the demand; but patiently waited to know the lady's pleasure to tell them whether they should be honoured with a ticket to Giardini's or Mingotti's benefit."

Vaneschi having become bankrupt and left the country, Giardini and Mingotti were foolish enough to undertake the management of the opera, which brought them both, as it has done many others, to the brink of ruin. Mingotti left England in 1758, and afterwards sang at the principal cities in Italy. In 1763 she established herself at Munich, where she was residing when Dr. Burney visited that city in 1772. Her ruinous speculation in London had swallowed up the fortune she had previously made by her exertions; and her income was barely sufficient, with economy, to support her respectably. "She seemed," Burney says, "to live very comfortably, was well received at court, and esteemed by all who were able to judge of her understanding and enjoy her conversation." "It gave me great pleasure," he adds, "to hear her speak concerning practical music, which she does with as much intelligence as any maestro di capella with whom I ever conversed. Her knowledge in singing, and powers of expression, in different styles, are still amazing, and must delight all such as can receive pleasure from song, unconnected with the blandishments of youth and beauty. She speaks three languages, German, French, and Italian, so well that it is difficult to say which of them is her own. English she likewise speaks, and Spanish, well enough to converse in them, and understands Latin; but in the three languages first mentioned she is truly eloquent."

As a singer and actress Dr. Burney thus describes her: "Her style of singing was always grand, and such as discovered her to be a perfect mistress of her art. She was a most judicious and complete actress, extending her intelligence to the poetry and every part of the drama; yet her greatest admirers acknowledged that her voice and manner would have been still more irresistible, if she had possessed a little more feminine grace and softness."

The last star which we shall enumerate in this vocal constellation, is the celebrated CATERINA GABRIELLI—celebrated not less for the singularity of her character than for her powers as a singer. She was the daughter of a cardinal's cook, and thence acquired the appellation (after the Italian fashion) of *La Cuochetina*. She was a pupil of Porpora's; and at an early age made herself remarkable throughout Italy for her extraordinary talents, and her capricious and untractable disposition. She was engaged to go to Madrid in 1758; on which occasion Metastasio gave his friend Farinelli the following account of her. "The amusing stories which you hear from Italy concerning our Signora Gabrielli are but too true: She is young, an Italian, favoured by nature, and of transcendent abilities in music: so that it is not surprising that, like other sirens, she should be capricious. But in your hands I hope she will be more prudent. She is perfectly aware of her own merit, and yet ex-

tremely timid. In order to moderate her impetuosity, it will be necessary, perhaps, to impress her mind with great respect for, or rather positive fear of, the sovereign and the court : but that this may not depress her spirits too much in performance, you should likewise encourage her by your approbation and the applause of your friends ; and I assure you she will deserve it. Indeed you are a more expert pilot than I, and I have no doubt will turn your skill to good account. At Vienna, Milan, and Lucca, where this young singer was dexterously managed, she enchanted everybody who heard her; but at Padua, where they tried to use the whip more than the spur, they threw away their money." We do not learn how far, or how successfully, Farinelli availed himself of these hints of the good-natured poet.

Brydone, in his Tour through Sicily and Malta, gives an ample and entertaining account of this singular person. " The first woman," says this agreeable writer, " is Gabrielli, who is certainly the greatest singer in the world, and those who sing in the same theatre must be capital, otherwise they never can be attended to. This, indeed, has been the fate of all the performers, except Pacchierotti, and he too gave himself up for lost on hearing her performance. It happened to be an air of execution, exactly adapted to her voice, in which she exerted herself in so astonishing a manner, that, before it was half done, poor Pacchierotti burst out

a crying, and ran in behind the scenes, lamenting that he had dared to appear on the same stage with so wonderful a singer, where his small talents must not only be lost, but where he must ever be accused of presumption, which he hoped was foreign to his character. It was with some difficulty they could prevail upon him to appear again; but from an applause well merited, both from his talents and modesty, he soon began to pluck up a little courage; and in the singing of a tender air, even she herself, as well as the audience, is said to have been moved.

"The performance of Gabrielli is so generally known and admired, that it is needless to say anything to you on that subject. Her wonderful execution and volubility of voice has long been the admiration of Italy, and has even obliged them to invent a new term to express it; and would she exert herself as much to please as to astonish, she might almost perform the wonders that have been ascribed to Orpheus and Timotheus: but it happens, luckily perhaps for the repose of mankind, that her caprice is, if possible, even greater than her talents, and has made her still more contemptible than these have made her celebrated. By this means, her character has often proved a sufficient antidote both to the charms of her voice and those of her person, which are, indeed, almost equally powerful: but if these had been united to the qualities of a modest and an amiable mind, she would

have made dreadful havoc in the world. However, with all her faults, she is certainly the most dangerous siren of modern times, and has made more conquests, I suppose, than any one woman breathing. It is but justice to add, that, contrary to the generality of her profession, she is by no means selfish or mercenary, but, on the contrary, has given many singular proofs of generosity and disinterestedness. She is very rich, from the bounty, as is supposed, of the last emperor, who was fond of having her at Vienna: but she was at last banished that city, as she has likewise been most of those in Italy, from the broils and squabbles that her intriguing spirit, perhaps, still more than her beauty, had excited.

"There are a great many anecdotes concerning her that would not make an unentertaining volume, and, I am told, are, or will soon be, published. Although she is considerably upwards of thirty, on the stage she scarcely appears to be eighteen; and this art of appearing young is none of the most contemptible she possesses. When she is in good humour, and really chooses to exert herself, there is nothing in music I have ever heard, to be compared to her performance; for she sings to the heart as well as to the fancy, when she pleases, and she then commands every passion with unbounded sway. But she is seldom capable of exercising these wonderful powers; and her caprice and her talents, exerting themselves by turns, have given

her all her life the singular fate of beeoming alternately an objeet of admiration and contempt. Her powers in acting and reciting are scarcely inferior to those of her singing : sometimes a few words in the recitative, with a simple aeeompaniment, produce an effect that I have never been sensible of from any other performer, and ineline me to believe what Rousseau advanees on this braneh of music, whieh with us is so much despised. She owes much of her merit to the instruetion she reeeived from Metastasio, partieularly in aeting and reciting ; and he allows that she does more justice to his operas than any other actress that ever attempted them.

" Her caprice is so fixed and stubborn, that neither interest, nor flattery, nor threats, nor punishments have the least power over it ; and it appears that treating her with respeet and contempt have an equal tendency to increase it. It is seldom that she eondeseends to exert these wonderful talents ; but most particularly if she imagines that sueh an exertion is expected. And instead of singing her airs as other aetresses do, for the most part she only hums them over, *a mezza voce:* and no art whatever is eapable of making her sing when she does not choose it. The most sueeessful expedient has ever been found, to prevail on her favourite lover (for she always has one) to plaee himself in the eentre of the pit or the front box ; and if they are on good terms, which is seldom the case,

she will address her tender airs to him, and exert herself to the utmost. Her present inamorato promised to give us this specimen of his power over her. He took his seat accordingly; but Gabrielli, probably suspecting the connivance, would take no notice of him; so that even this expedient does not always succeed. The viceroy, who is fond of music, has tried every method with her to no purpose. Some time ago he gave a great dinner to the principal nobility of Palermo, and sent an invitation to Gabrielli to be of the party. Every other person arrived at the hour of invitation. The viceroy ordered dinner to be put back, and sent to let her know that the company waited her. The messenger found her reading in bed. She said she was sorry for having made the company wait, and begged he would make her apology, but that really she had entirely forgot her engagement. The viceroy would have forgiven this piece of insolence, but when the company came to the opera, Gabrielli repeated her part with the utmost negligence and indifference, and sang all her airs in what they call *sotto voce*, that is, so low that they can scarcely be heard. The viceroy was offended; but as he is a good-tempered man, he was loth to make use of authority; but at last, by a perseverance in this insolent stubbornness, she obliged him to threaten her with punishment in case she any longer refused to sing. On this she grew more obstinate than ever, declaring that force and

authority should never succeed with her; that he might make her cry, but never could make her sing. The viceroy then sent her to prison, where she remained twelve days; during which time she gave magnificent entertainments every day, paid the debts of all the poor prisoners, and distributed large sums in charity. The viceroy was obliged to give up struggling with her, and she was at last set at liberty amidst the acclamations of the poor.

"Luckily for us, she is at present in good humour, and sometimes exerts herself to the utmost of her power. She says she has several times been on terms with the manager of our opera, but thinks she shall never be able to pluck up resolution enough to go to England. What do you think is her reason? It is by no means a bad one. She says she cannot command her caprice, but for the most part it commands her; and that there she could have no opportunity of indulging it. For, says she, were I to take it into my head not to sing, I am told the people there would certainly mob me, and perhaps break my bones; now I like to sleep in a whole skin, although it should even be in a prison. She alleges, too, that it is not always caprice that prevents her from singing, but that it often depends upon physical causes. And this, indeed, I can readily believe: for that wonderful flexibility of voice, that runs with such rapidity and neatness through the most minute divisions, and produces

almost instantaneously so great a variety of modulation, must surely depend on the very nicest tone of the fibres. And if these are in the smallest degree relaxed, or their elasticity diminished, how is it possible that their contractions and expansions can so readily obey the will as to produce these effects? The opening of the glottis which forms the voice is extremely small, and in every variety of tone its diameter must suffer a sensible change; for the same diameter must ever produce the same tone. So wonderfully minute are its contractions and dilatations, that Dr. Keil, I think, computes that in some voices its opening, not more than the tenth of an inch, is divided into upwards of twelve hundred parts, the different sound of every one of which is perceptible to an exact ear. Now what a nice tension of fibres must this require! I should imagine even the most minute change in the air must cause a sensible difference, and that in our foggy climate the fibres would be in danger of losing this wonderful sensibility, or at least that they would very often be put out of tune. It is the same case with an ordinary voice, where the variety of divisions run through, and the volubility with which they are executed, bear no proportion to those of a Gabrielli."*

* The public do not make sufficient allowance for the extreme delicacy of the vocal organs of great singers. Signora Mingotti told Burney, that "she was frequently hissed by the English for having the toothache, a cold, or a fever, to which the

Notwithstanding her dread of the English public, however, Gabrielli came to London in 1775. She did not make so great an impression as she ought to have done; for, though no longer young, she had neither lost her beauty nor her vocal powers. "She had no indications," says Burney, "of low birth in her countenance or deportment, which had all the grace and dignity of a Roman matron. Her reputation was so great before her arrival in England, for singing and caprice, that the public, expecting perhaps too much of both, was unwilling to allow her due praise in her performance, and too liberal in ascribing everything she said and did to pride and insolence. It having been reported that

good people of England will readily allow every human being to be liable, except an actor or a singer." Our vocal performers are constantly twitted with *theatrical* ailments, as if they, of all people in the world, can never have an illness unless there is a design in it; and are thus inconsiderately treated with great injustice. Look at the life of an Italian *prima donna*—Madame Grisi, for instance—during the London season; her continual and seemingly indefatigable exertion, night after night, and morning after morning, at operas, concerts, rehearsals, and musical parties at the houses of the great, exposed to the effects of heated rooms and chilling draughts, and suffering, moreover, under those influences of our climate which are so strongly felt by the "children of the south." Observe, at the same time, with what steadiness she goes through her various labours, and how very seldom the public have to complain of disappointment; and we shall be convinced that no class of persons are less apt than great singers to allow even real indisposition to interfere with the fulfilment of their duties.

she often feigned sickness, and sang ill when she was able to sing well, few were willing to allow she could be sick, or that she ever sang her best when she was here; and those who were inclined to believe that sometimes she might perhaps have exerted herself in pure caprice, thought her voice on the decline, or that fame, as usual, had deviated from the truth in speaking of her talents. Her voice, though of an exquisite quality, was not very powerful. As an actress, though of low stature, there were such grace and dignity in her gestures and deportment as caught every unprejudiced eye; indeed she filled the stage and occupied the attention of the spectators so much, that they could look at nothing else while she was in view. Her freaks and *espiegleries*, which had fixed her reputation, seemed to have been very much subdued before her arrival in England. In conversation she seemed the most intelligent and best-bred *virtuosa* with whom I had ever conversed; not only on the subject of music, but on every subject concerning which a well-educated female, who had seen the world, might reasonably be expected to have obtained information. She had been three years in Russia previous to her arrival in England, during which time no peculiarities of individual character, national manners, or court etiquette, had escaped her observation. In youth, her beauty and caprice had occasioned a universal delirium among her young countrymen, and there were still remains of

both suffieiently powerful, while she was in England, to render eredible their former influence." Soon after leaving England she retired to Bologna, where she spent the remainder of her life in tranquillity.

Besides the singers of whom some aceount has now been given, many others (some of them of hardly inferior pretensions) might be enumerated as being the immediate diseiples of the great Italian sehools in the beginning of the last century. Among these may be mentioned the names of Valentini, Amorevoli, Montieelli, Manzoli, Raaf, Signora Strada and Signora Frasi.

It is to be remarked, that, during the period when the Italian sehool of singing was in its most flourishing state, the prineipal male performers were possessed of *soprano* or *contralto* voices. In the operas of that time, subordinate parts only were written for tenor or bass voices, and given to performers of inferior note. In several of Handel's Italian operas, written for our stage, there are parts for a bass, which were performed by Roschi, a singer of ability, though it does not seem that he had any reputation on the eontinent. When Handel, in 1729, formed a eompany for the performanee of Italian operas, and announeed their names in the newspapers, he said that there was "a bass voice from Hamburgh, there being none worth engaging in Italy." This bass voice belonged to a singer of the name of Reimschneider, and

there were two other German singers, Reinhold and Waltz, whose names are attached to the bass parts in the published music of several Italian operas performed in London. Parts for a tenor voice are of very rare occurrence: and the only tenor singer belonging to the Italian school of the period in question, who acquired any great degree of celebrity, was Raaf, a native of Germany. At a time when the hero or the lover was a *soprano* or a *contralto*, the tenor must necessarily have been excluded, except in the very rare instances where parts for these different voices could be introduced without interfering with each other, and producing an incongruous effect. In tyrants, old men, or rough and harsh characters, the bass voice could be appropriately introduced: but it would seem that nothing more was required from the performance than force and energy, without any of the polish and cultivation which have been attained by the bass-singers of more recent times.

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